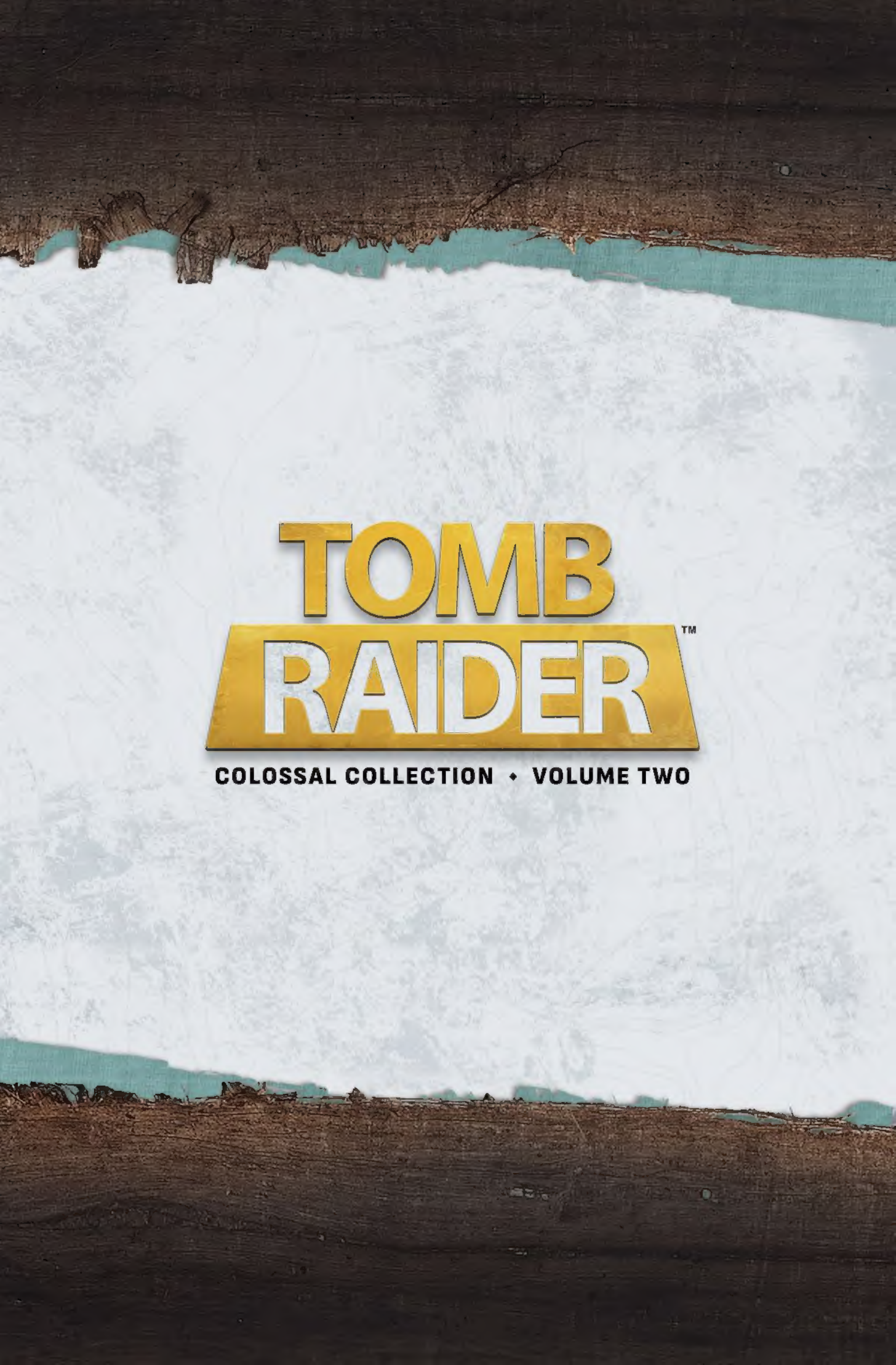
TOMB RAIDER™

COLOSSAL COLLECTION • VOLUME TWO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RAIDER™
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DARK HORSE BOOKS

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TOMB RAIDER COLOSSAL COLLECTION VOLUME 2

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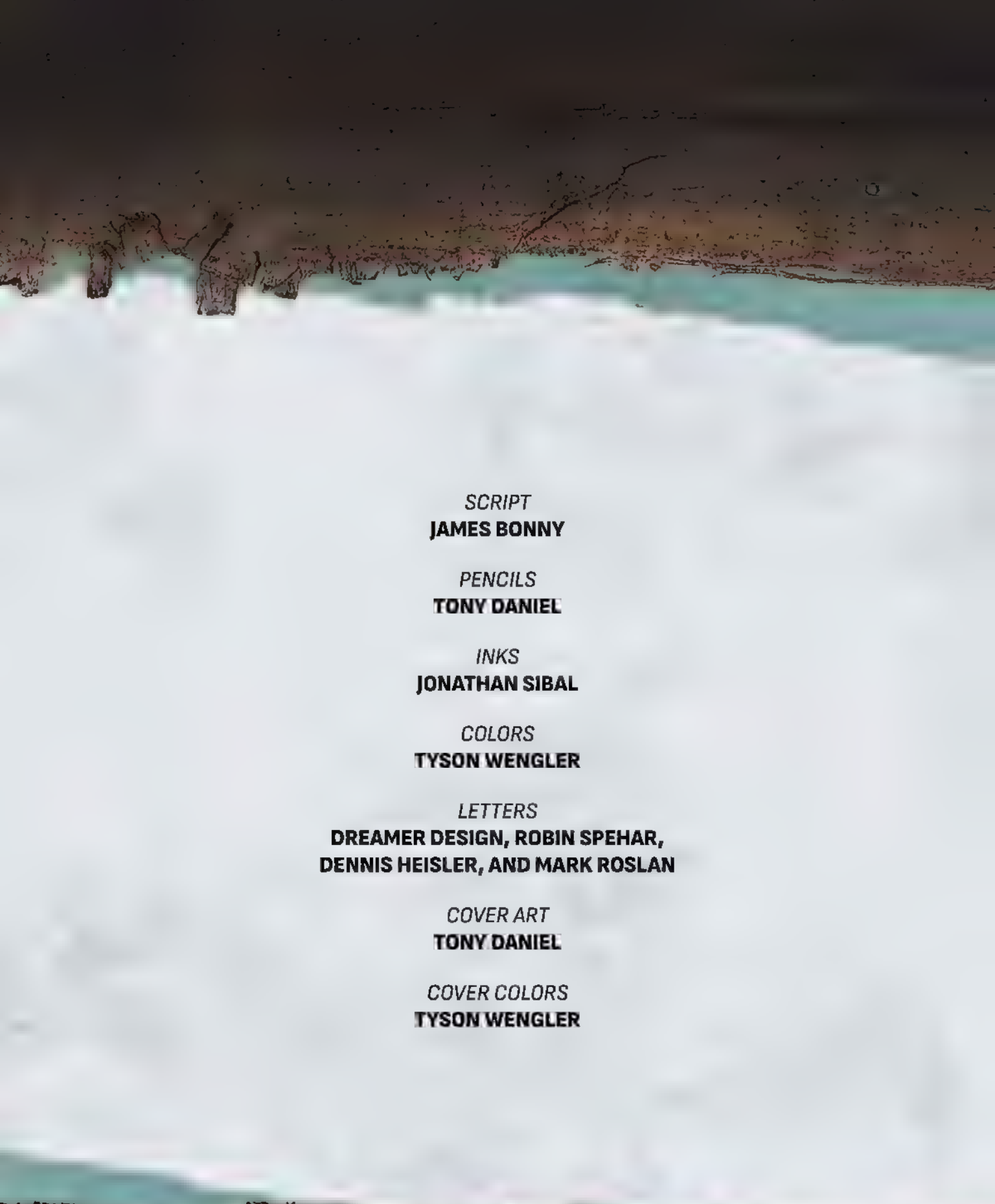
THE BLACK LEGION PART 1
TONY DANIEL



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THE ARIZONA DESERT.

MONEY SHOT... CORNER POCKET.
HATE TO SHOOT AND RUN, FELLAS, BUT...
DROP THE CASH... AND WE'LL LET YOU WALK OUTTA HERE.
IF I WANT TO WALK OUTTA HERE, WITH MY MONEY, WHO'S GONNA STOP ME?
I COUNT SIX AGAINST ONE, TONTO.

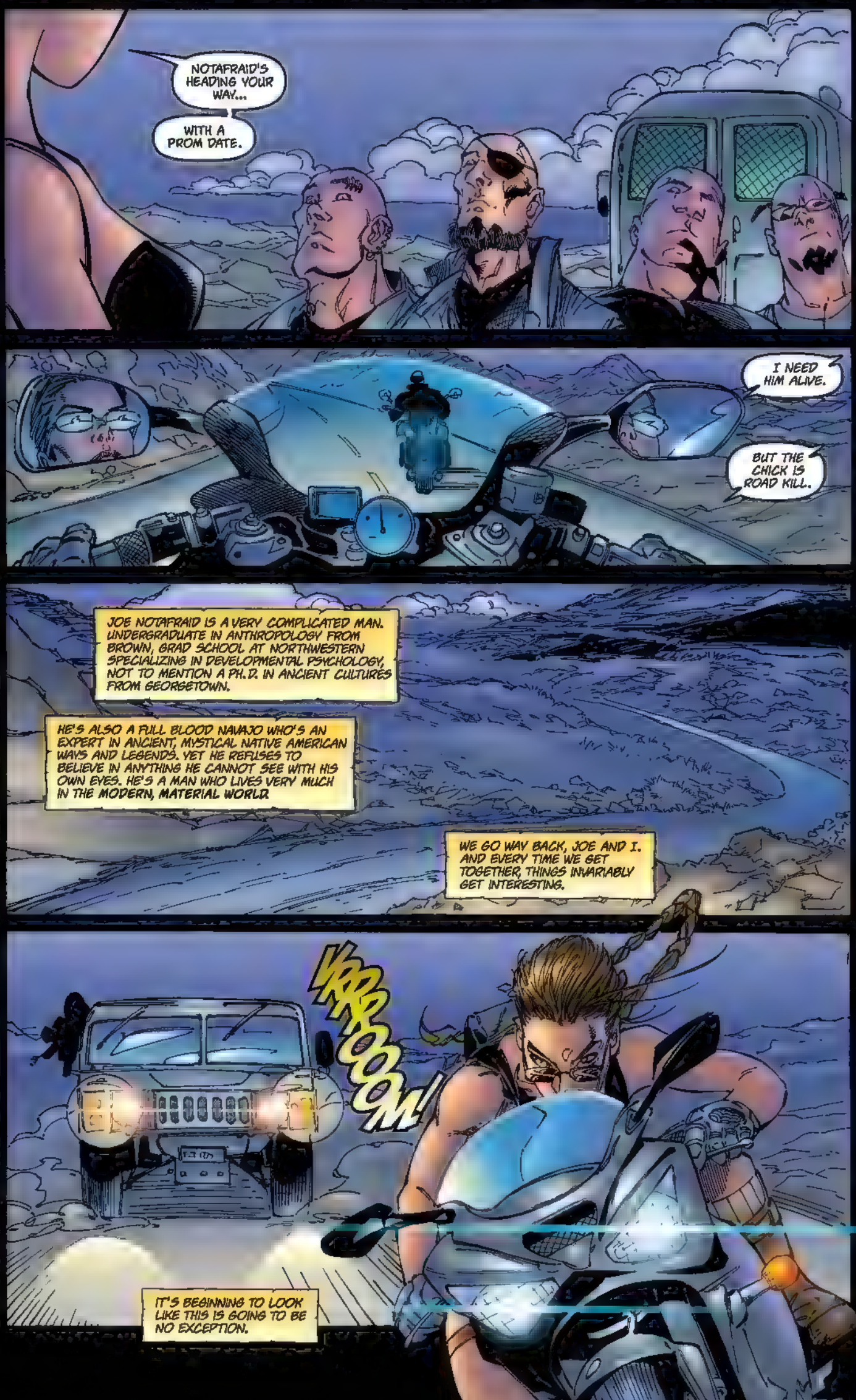
PERHAPS YOU CHAPS HAD BEST COUNT AGAIN.
THE BLACK LEGION
PART I OF III

I DUN DIED AND GONE TO HEAVEN.
THE LINE STARTS HERE.
YOU HAVE QUITE THE KNACK, JOE NOTAFRAID.
ALWAYS FINDING THE MOST CHARMING OUT OF THE WAY SPOTS.
THIS ISN'T YOUR FIGHT, MORNING DOVE.
REMIND YOU OF OLD TIMES, SWEETIE?
SMAAK!
WHOOMPHH!

CRAAAKK!
TWAP!
AAAARRR!
CRAAASHH!

YOU ALWAYS KNEW HOW TO SHOW A LADY A GOOD TIME, JOE.
BUT YOU PROMISED SOMETHING REALLY BIG WHEN YOU CALLED.
OH, THIS IS MORE THAN BIG, LARA.
YOU AND I GONNA FIND THE HOLY GRAIL OF THE WEST.
THE LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE.
I SHOULD'VE KNOWN THAT WAS IT.
WE'LL MAKE HISTORY, MORNING DOVE.
YOU MEAN IF WE DON'T BECOME PART OF HISTORY...
LIKE ALL THE OTHERS.

JOE NOTAFRAID, I PRESUME.
DON'T MAKE ME ASK AGAIN, MAX.
I'LL COUNT TO THREE... BUT I'LL PULL THE TRIGGER ON TWO.
ONE...
YES, LADY JASMINE! THAT'S JOE NOTAFRAID! HE'S THE ONE I SOLD THE STONE TO!
BLAAM!
IF THERE'S ONE QUALITY I APPRECIATE IN A PERSON, MAX, IT'S HONESTY.

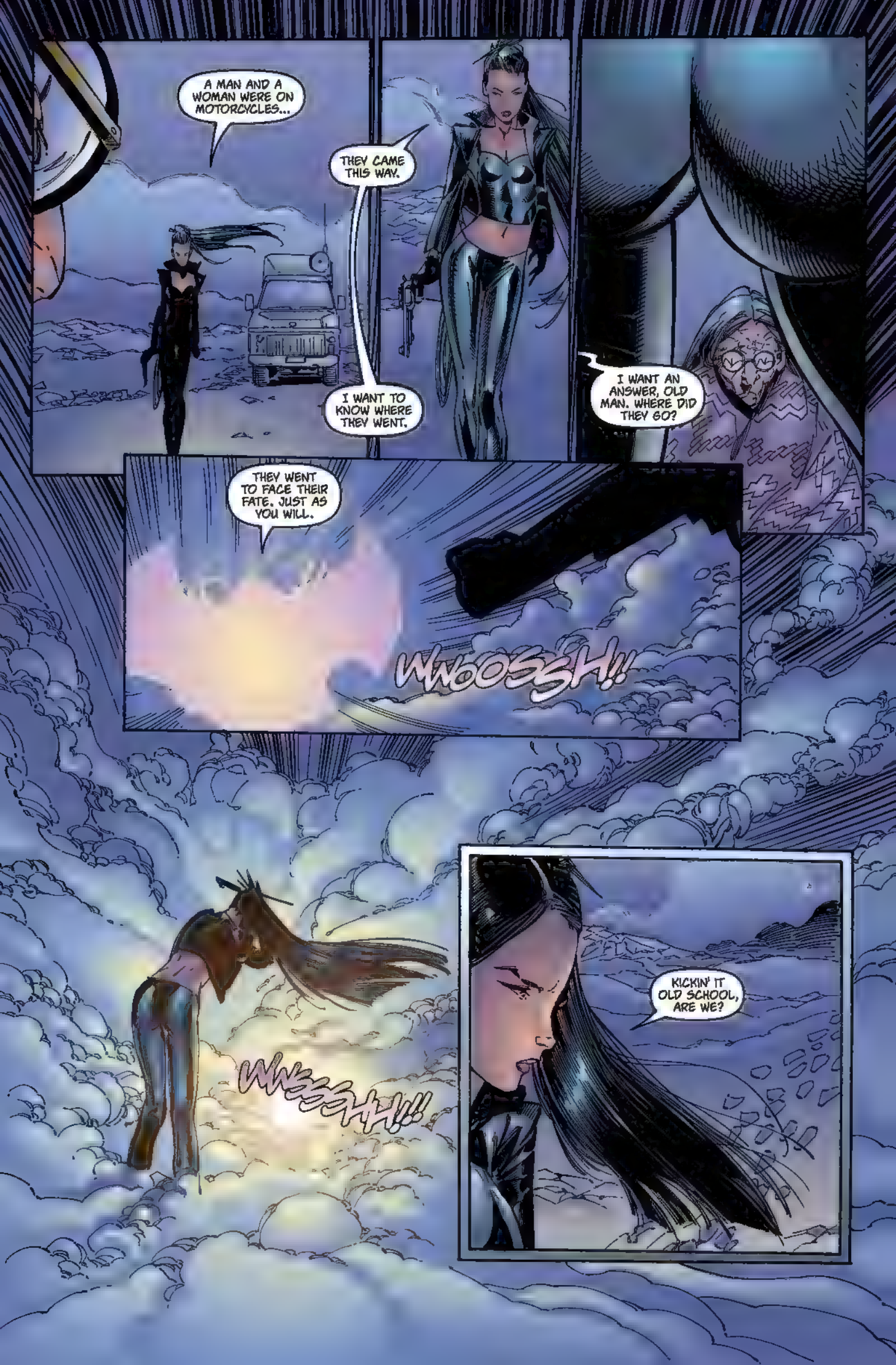

NOTAFRAID'S HEADING YOUR WAY...
WITH A PROM DATE.
I NEED HIM ALIVE.
BUT THE CHICK IS ROAD KILL.
JOE NOTAFRAID IS A VERY COMPLICATED MAN. UNDERGRADUATE IN ANTHROPOLOGY FROM BROWN, GRAD SCHOOL AT NORTHWESTERN SPECIALIZING IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY, NOT TO MENTION A PH.D. IN ANCIENT CULTURES FROM GEORGETOWN.
HE'S ALSO A FULL BLOOD NAVAJO WHO'S AN EXPERT IN ANCIENT, MYSTICAL NATIVE AMERICAN WAYS AND LEGENDS. YET HE REFUSES TO BELIEVE IN ANYTHING HE CANNOT SEE WITH HIS OWN EYES. HE'S A MAN WHO LIVES VERY MUCH IN THE MODERN, MATERIAL WORLD.
WE GO WAY BACK, JOE AND I. AND EVERY TIME WE GET TOGETHER, THINGS INVARIABLY GET INTERESTING.
VRROOM!
IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE THIS IS GOING TO BE NO EXCEPTION.

VRRROAR!
BLAAAAM!
BLAAAAM!
BLAAAAM!
BOOAM!
BOOAM!
BOOAM!
UUGAH!
SHKCRREECH!
TH-BOOOM!

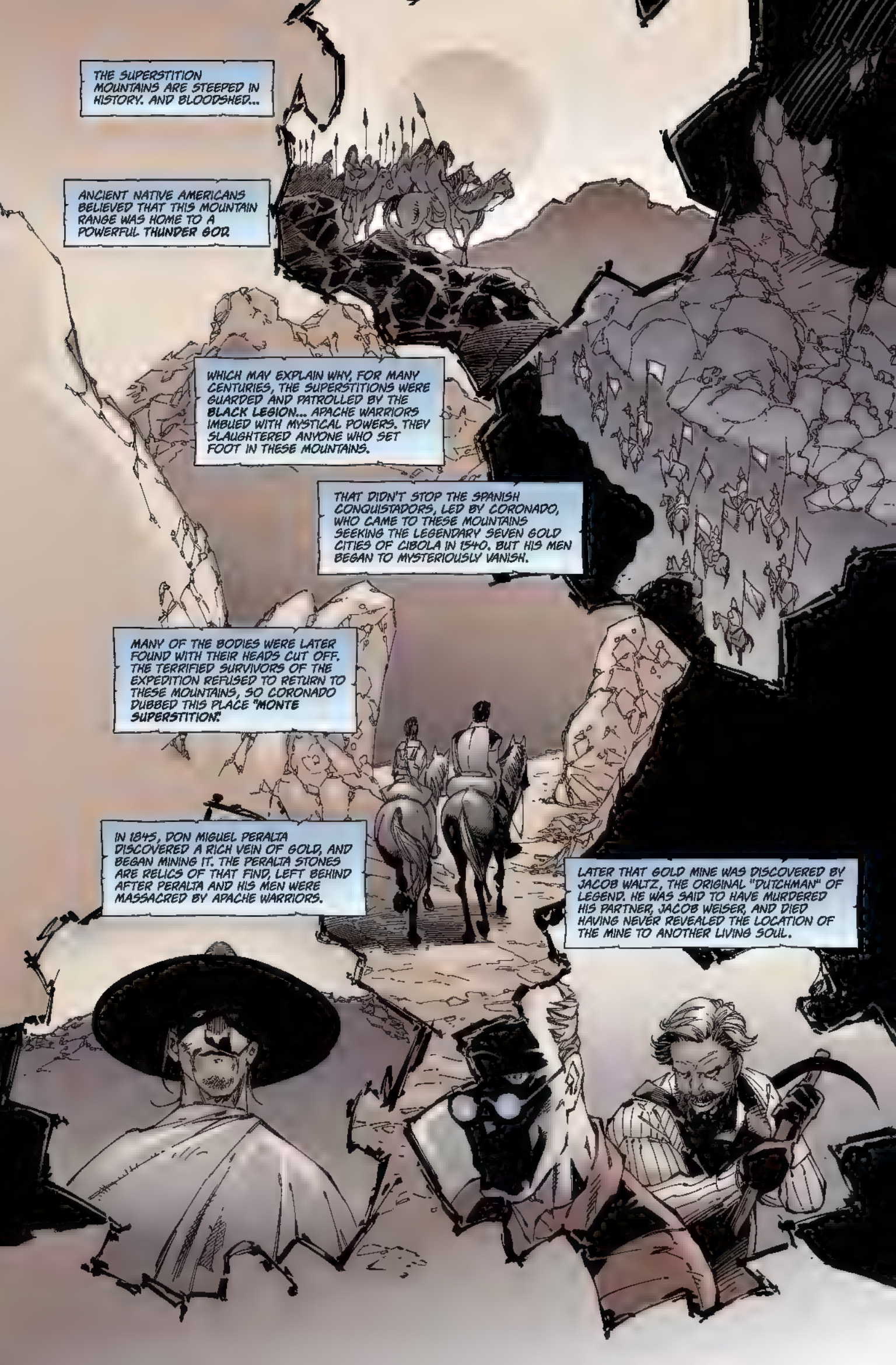
AARRGGA!
SKREECH!
LADY JASMINE! PLEASE! PLEASE! I SWEAR MY LIFE TO YOU!
THAT'S RIGHT, MY LOVE. YOU DID. AND NOW YOU FAILED ME.
DRIVE.
AAAAEEEEEEYYY!
WWOOSH-FOO!

A THING LIKE THAT WOULD GIVE MOST PEOPLE PAUSE. MAKE THEM THINK TWICE ABOUT CONTINUING ON. BUT I'M NOT LIKE MOST PEOPLE. SOMEBODY TRYING TO KILL ME MAKES ME THINK I'M PROBABLY ON THE RIGHT TRACK.
EVEN IF THAT TRACK LEADS TO ONE OF THE MOST DEADLY PLACES.
THE SUPERSTITION MOUNTAINS. THE LOCATION OF THE GREATEST MYSTERY OF THE OLD WEST. THE FABLED LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE.
I TAKE IT THOSE WERE ACQUAINTANCES OF YOURS BACK THERE?
THE COMPETITION. I THOUGHT I'D LOST THEM.
HMM. IT SEEMS THAT THERE'S A GREAT DEAL YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME, JOE.
I'LL FILL YOU IN ON THE WAY, LARA. WE'RE BURNING DAYLIGHT.
LARA CROFT, THIS IS GRANDFATHER.
SO THIS IS MORNING DOVE. YES, SHE'S JUST AS YOU DESCRIBED HER, JOE NOTAFRAID.
AN HONOR TO MEET YOU, SIR. I DO HOPE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN WAITING FOR US LONG.
YOU ARRIVED JUST AS I EXPECTED YOU WOULD.
WITH DANGER BEHIND, AND EVEN MORE DANGER AHEAD.

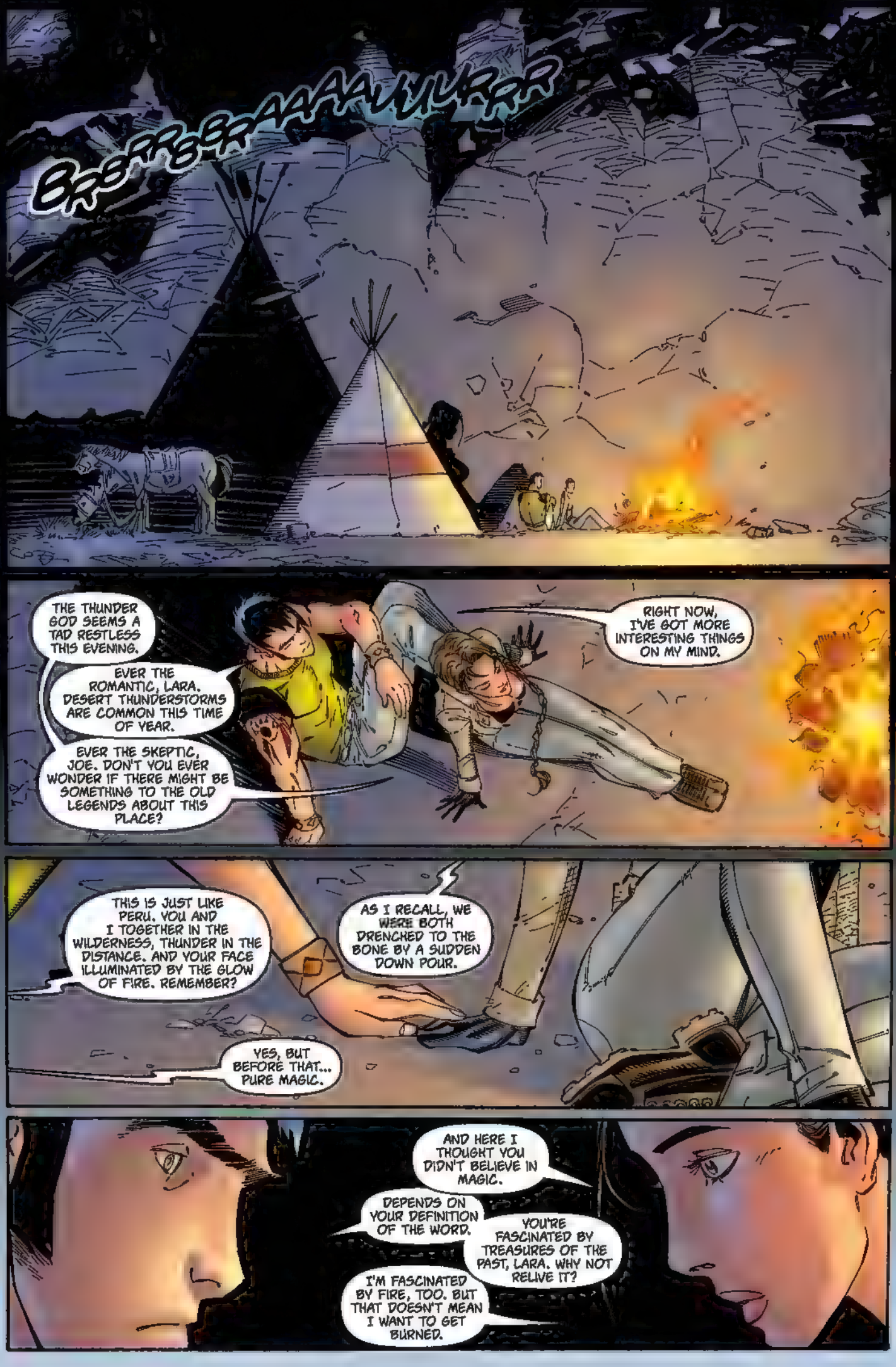
WE'VE GOT FOOD AND WATER FOR THREE DAYS.
ENOUGH FOR A WEEKEND OUTING. YOU MUST THINK THIS IS GOING TO BE EASY.
WE'VE GOTTA TRAVEL LIGHT. BUT I KNOW OF A NATURAL SPRING. AND THERE'S PLENTY OF GAME TO HUNT.
SOME CAN HUNT US AS WELL. WHICH SEEMS ONLY FAIR.
TAKE THIS, JOE NOTAFRAID. WEAR IT AROUND YOUR NECK UNTIL YOU RETURN... TO THIS WORLD.
IT WILL OFFER PROTECTION.
AND YOU'LL NEED IT.
THANK YOU, GRANDFATHER.
YOUR GRANDFATHER IS AN INTERESTING GENTLEMAN.
OH, HE'S NOT MY GRANDFATHER. THAT'S JUST HOW HE'S KNOWN. HE'S A TRIBAL MEDICINE MAN. A SHAMAN.
HERE, YOU WEAR THIS, MORNING DOVE. THE COLOR COMPLIMENTS YOUR EYES.

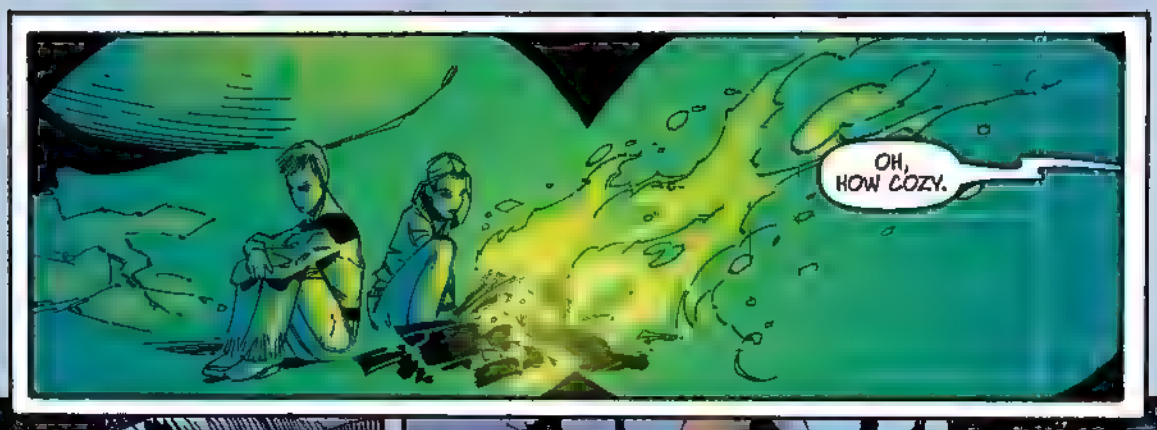

A MAN AND A WOMAN WERE ON MOTORCYCLES...
THEY CAME THIS WAY.
I WANT TO KNOW WHERE THEY WENT.
I WANT AN ANSWER, OLD MAN. WHERE DID THEY GO?
THEY WENT TO FACE THEIR FATE. JUST AS YOU WILL.
WWOOSSH!!
WWSSHH!!!
KICKIN' IT OLD SCHOOL, ARE WE?

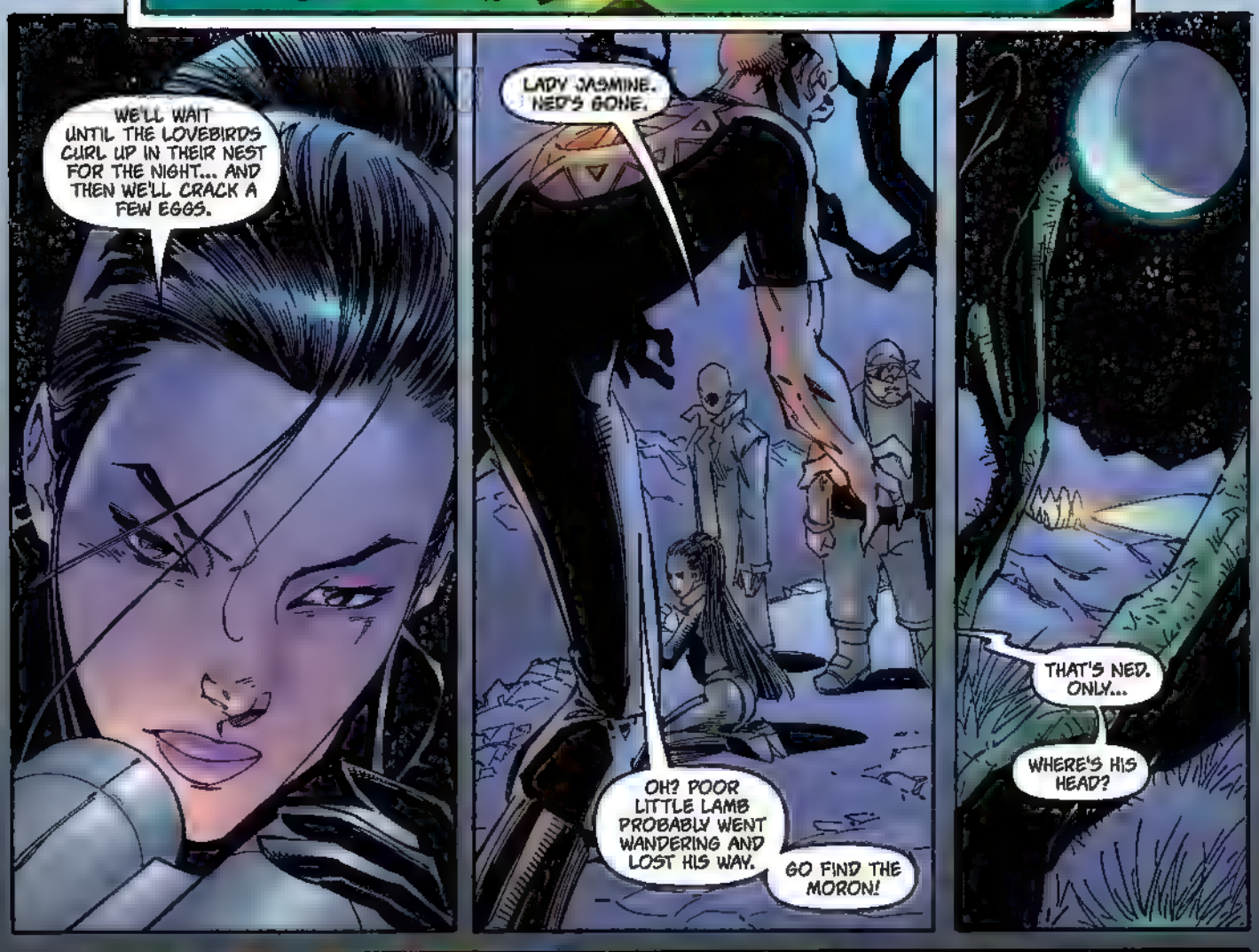
RIGHT, NO MORE STALLING, NOTAFRAID. LET'S HEAR ABOUT THE COMPETITION.
STRANGERS WHO BLEW INTO TOWN. TOUGH HOMBRES LED BY AN EVEN TOUGHER WOMAN, AFTER THE SAME THING I WAS AFTER. THE THING THAT WILL LEAD US TO THE DUTCHMAN'S GOLD.
LUCKY FOR US, I GOT TO IT FIRST.
JOE, IF YOU TELL ME YOU BOUGHT A TREASURE MAP, I'M GOING TO LOSE WHAT LITTLE RESPECT I HAVE LEFT FOR YOU.
YOU KNOW I'M SMARTER THAN THAT, LARA.
I BOUGHT A TREASURE STONE.
THE PERALTA STONES? BUT THEY'RE LOCKED AWAY IN A PHOENIX MUSEUM.
UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU'VE ADDED BURGLARY TO YOUR RESUME.
THE PERALTA STONES HAVE NEVER YIELDED THE LOCATION OF THE GOLD MINE. BUT THIS STONE WAS CARVED BY THE DUTCHMAN HIMSELF... JACOB WALTZ.
IT'S THE KEY STONE, WHICH WILL LEAD US TO THE OTHER PIECES OF THE DUTCHMAN'S STONE MAP. I BOUGHT IT OFF AN OLD DESERT RAT NAMED MAX BETCHER FOR FIVE GRAND.
SANDSTONE ENCRUSTED WITH IRON PYRITE... "FOOL'S GOLD." IRONIC, DON'T YOU THINK?
WHAT'S THE OLD SAYING? "A FOOL AND HIS MONEY...?"
IT WAS MONEY WELL SPENT, MORNING DOVE.
IT'S GOING TO LEAD US TO THE HOLY GRAIL OF THE OLD WEST.

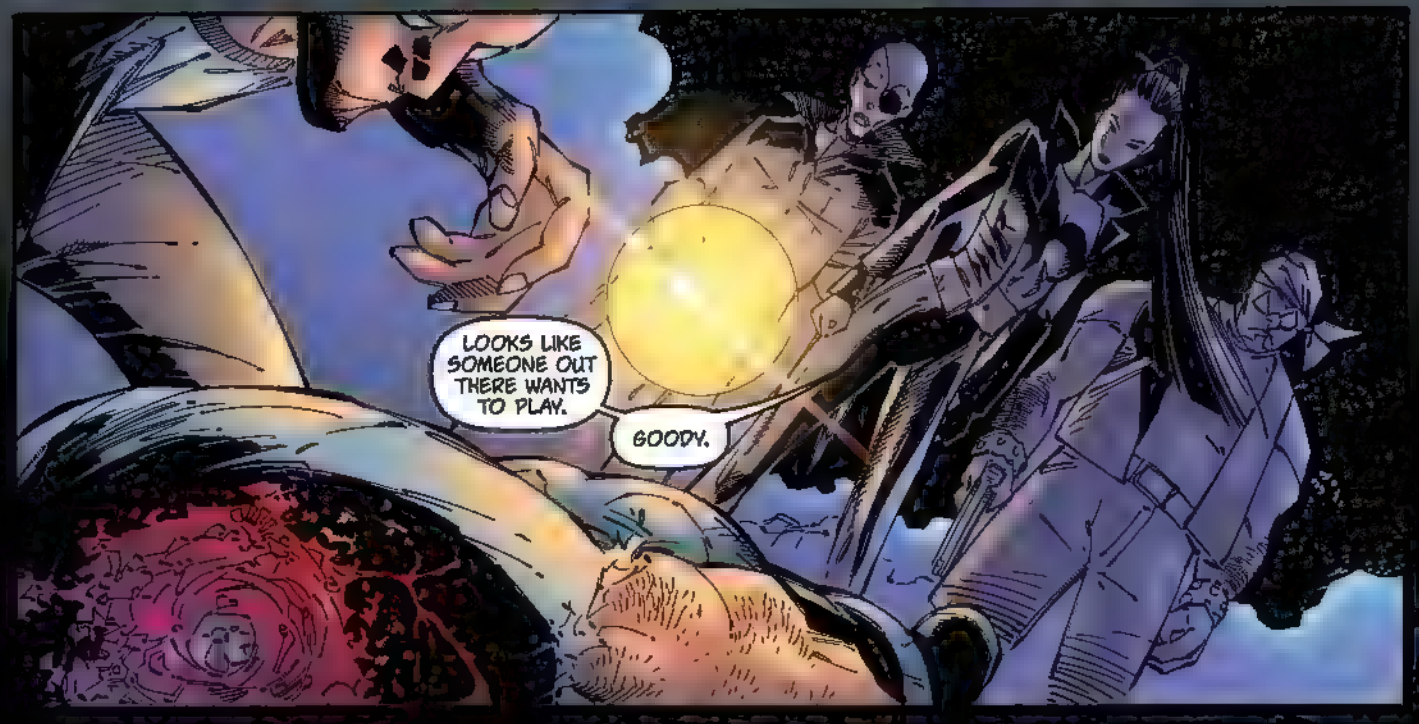

THE SUPERSTITION MOUNTAINS ARE STEEPED IN HISTORY. AND BLOODSHED...
ANCIENT NATIVE AMERICANS BELIEVED THAT THIS MOUNTAIN RANGE WAS HOME TO A POWERFUL THUNDER GOD.
WHICH MAY EXPLAIN WHY, FOR MANY CENTURIES, THE SUPERSTITIONS WERE GUARDED AND PATROLLED BY THE BLACK LEGION... APACHE WARRIORS IMBUED WITH MYSTICAL POWERS. THEY SLAUGHTERED ANYONE WHO SET FOOT IN THESE MOUNTAINS.
THAT DIDN'T STOP THE SPANISH CONQUISTADORS, LED BY CORONADO, WHO CAME TO THESE MOUNTAINS SEEKING THE LEGENDARY SEVEN GOLD CITIES OF CIBOLA IN 1540. BUT HIS MEN BEGAN TO MYSTERIOUSLY VANISH.
MANY OF THE BODIES WERE LATER FOUND WITH THEIR HEADS CUT OFF. THE TERRIFIED SURVIVORS OF THE EXPEDITION REFUSED TO RETURN TO THESE MOUNTAINS, SO CORONADO DUBBED THIS PLACE "MONTE SUPERSTITION."
IN 1845, DON MIGUEL PERALTA DISCOVERED A RICH VEIN OF GOLD, AND BEGAN MINING IT. THE PERALTA STONES ARE RELICS OF THAT FIND, LEFT BEHIND AFTER PERALTA AND HIS MEN WERE MASSACRED BY APACHE WARRIORS.
LATER THAT GOLD MINE WAS DISCOVERED BY JACOB WALTZ, THE ORIGINAL "DUTCHMAN" OF LEGEND. HE WAS SAID TO HAVE MURDERED HIS PARTNER, JACOB WEISER, AND DIED HAVING NEVER REVEALED THE LOCATION OF THE MINE TO ANOTHER LIVING SOUL.

SINCE THEN, TALES OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE, SAID TO BE ONE OF THE RICHEST VEINS OF GOLD ON EARTH, HAVE DRAWN COUNTLESS FORTUNE HUNTERS INTO THE SUPERSTITIONS.
MANY NEVER LEFT.
AND NOW COME TWO MORE...


BRRRRRAAAAAUUURRR
THE THUNDER GOD SEEMS A TAD RESTLESS THIS EVENING.
EVER THE ROMANTIC, LARA. DESERT THUNDERSTORMS ARE COMMON THIS TIME OF YEAR.
EVER THE SKEPTIC, JOE. DON'T YOU EVER WONDER IF THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING TO THE OLD LEGENDS ABOUT THIS PLACE?
RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT MORE INTERESTING THINGS ON MY MIND.
THIS IS JUST LIKE PERU. YOU AND I TOGETHER IN THE WILDERNESS, THUNDER IN THE DISTANCE. AND YOUR FACE ILLUMINATED BY THE GLOW OF FIRE. REMEMBER?
AS I RECALL, WE WERE BOTH DRENCHED TO THE BONE BY A SUDDEN DOWN POUR.
YES, BUT BEFORE THAT... PURE MAGIC.
AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE IN MAGIC.
DEPENDS ON YOUR DEFINITION OF THE WORD.
YOU'RE FASCINATED BY TREASURES OF THE PAST, LARA. WHY NOT RELIVE IT?
I'M FASCINATED BY FIRE, TOO. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I WANT TO GET BURNED.

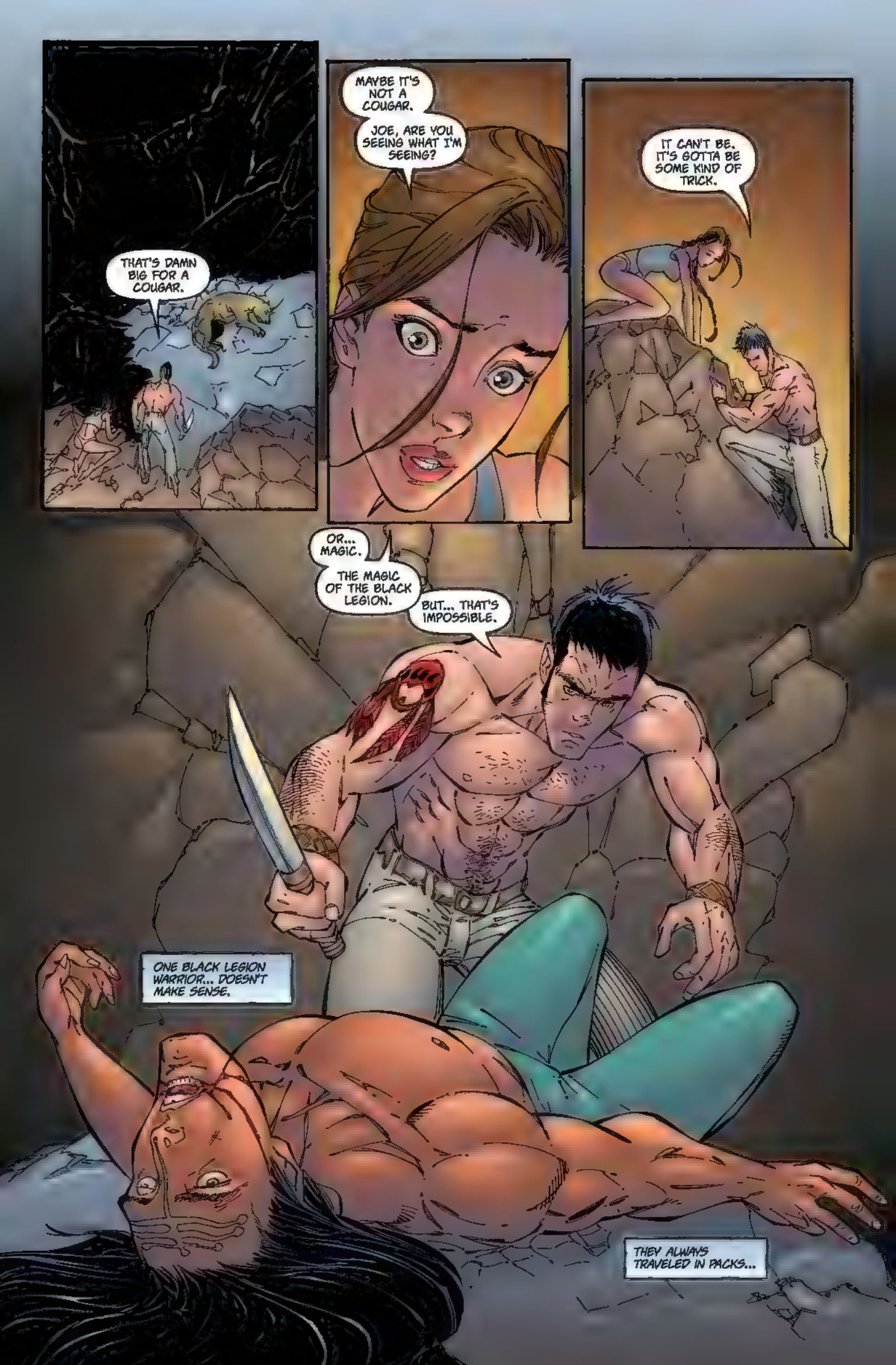

OH, HOW COZY.


WE'LL WAIT UNTIL THE LOVEBIRDS CURL UP IN THEIR NEST FOR THE NIGHT... AND THEN WE'LL CRACK A FEW EGGS.
LADY JASMINE. NED'S GONE.
OH? POOR LITTLE LAMB PROBABLY WENT WANDERING AND LOST HIS WAY.
GO FIND THE MORON!
THAT'S NED. ONLY...
WHERE'S HIS HEAD?

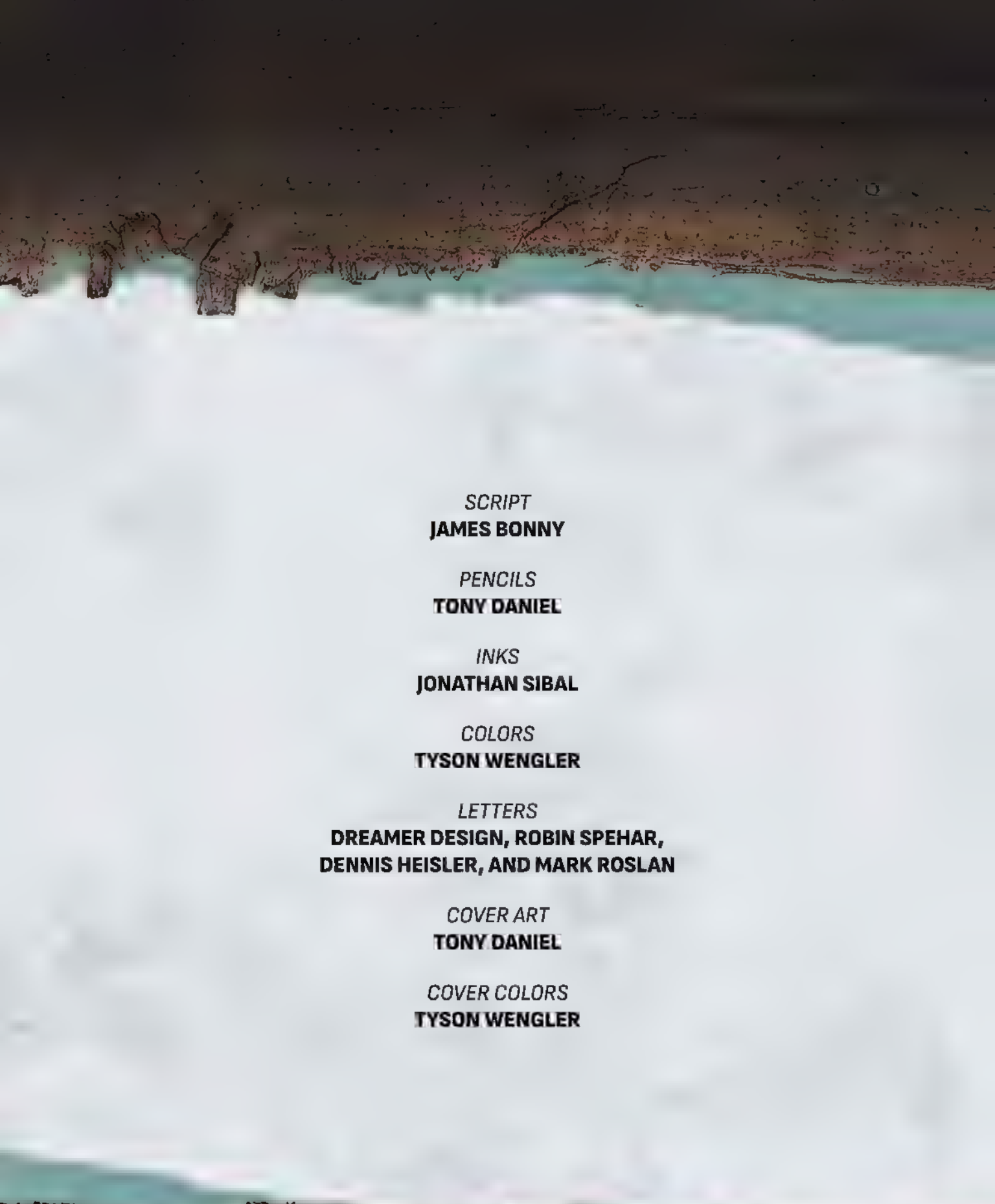

LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE OUT THERE WANTS TO PLAY.
GOODY.

CRUNCH!
GGGGRRRRAAAA!
JOE!?!
CAN'T GET A CLEAN SHOT. SO...
GGRRAAALL!

GRRAA!
GGRRRAAA!
GGRRAAALL!
RRAG!


THAT'S DAMN BIG FOR A COUGAR.
MAYBE IT'S NOT A COUGAR.
JOE, ARE YOU SEEING WHAT I'M SEEING?
IT CAN'T BE. IT'S GOTTA BE SOME KIND OF TRICK.
OR... MAGIC.
THE MAGIC OF THE BLACK LEGION.
BUT... THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
ONE BLACK LEGION WARRIOR... DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.
THEY ALWAYS TRAVELED IN PACKS...

AND THEY ALWAYS KILLED INTRUDERS!
TO BE CONTINUED...



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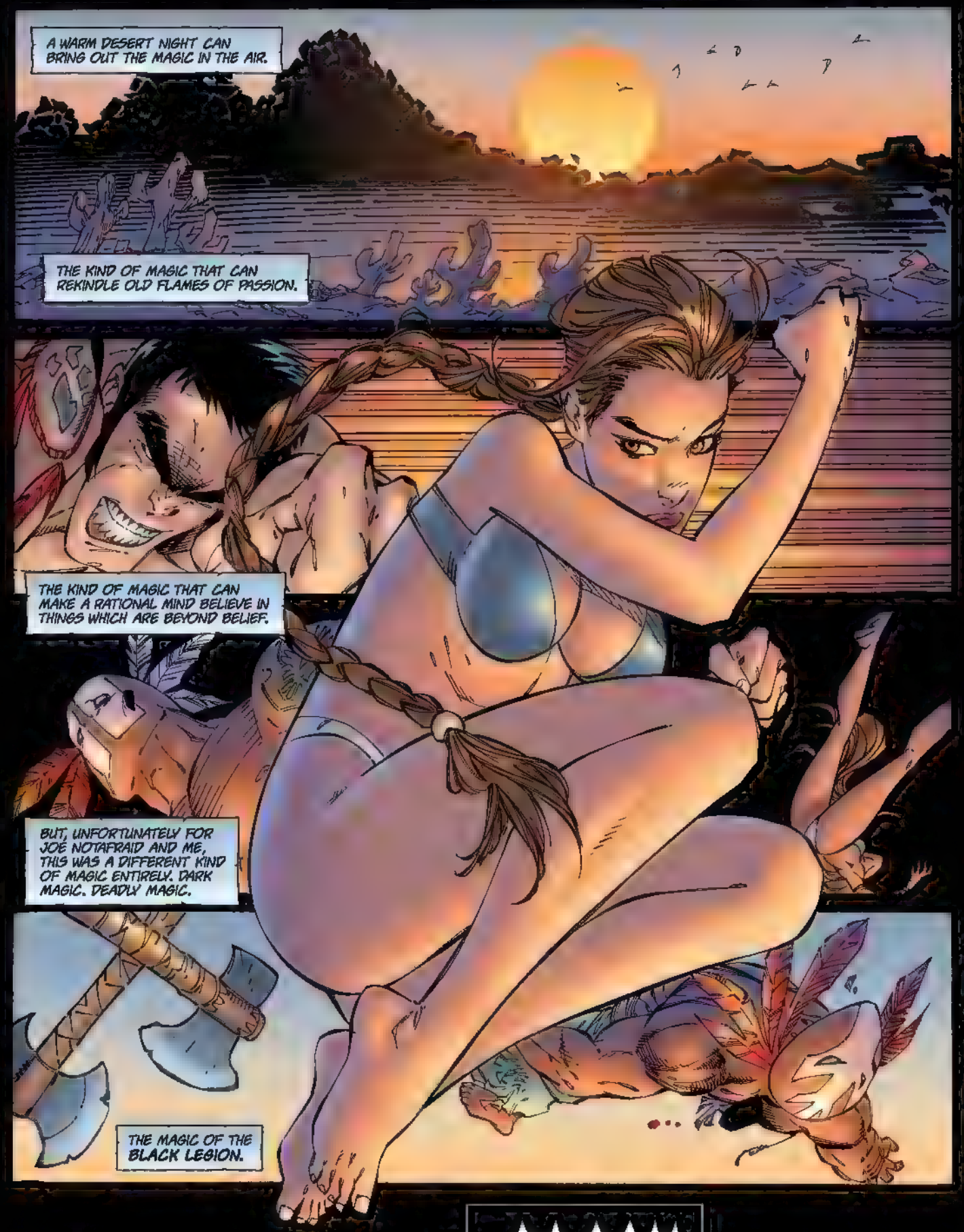
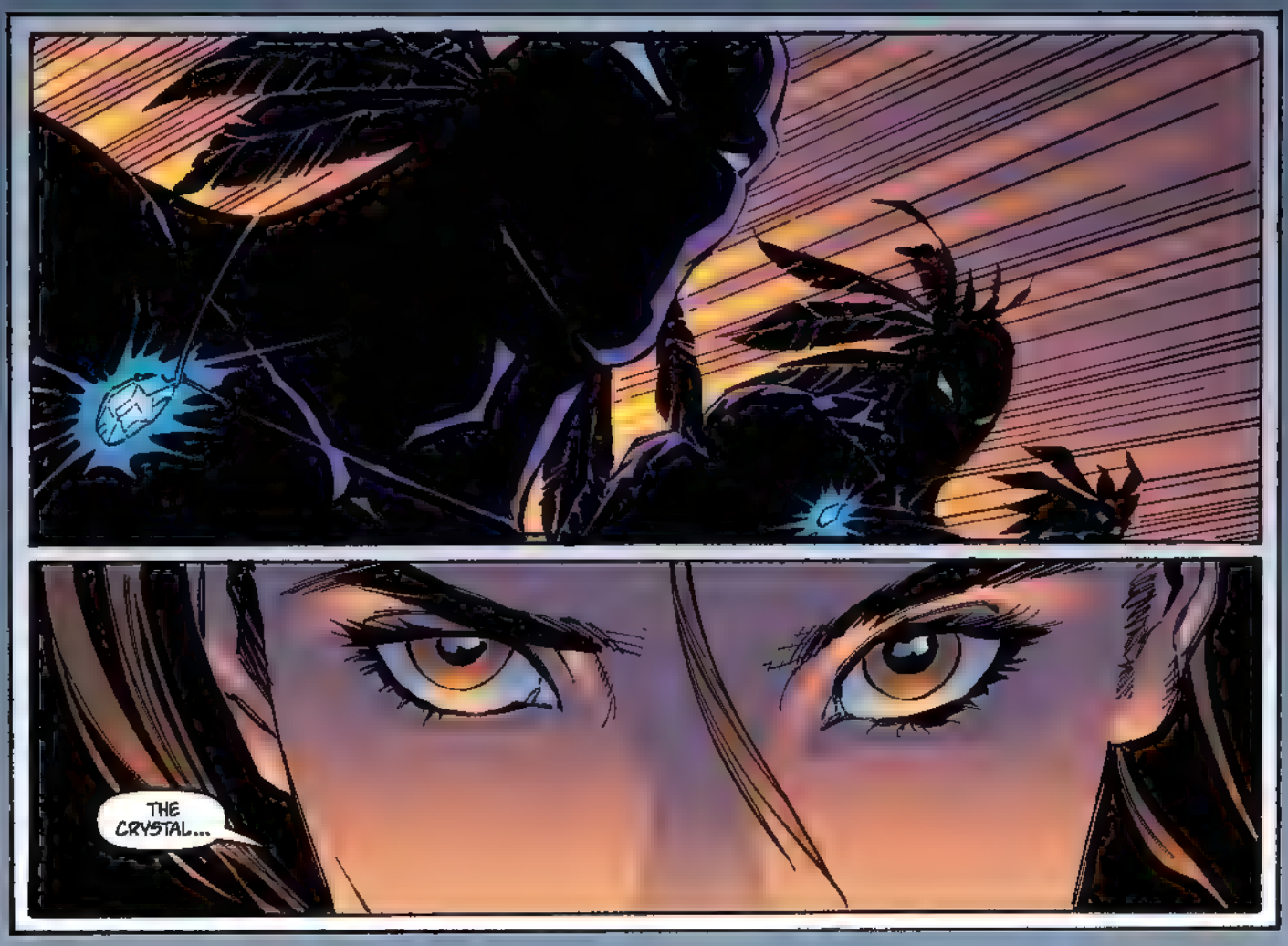

A WARM DESERT NIGHT CAN BRING OUT THE MAGIC IN THE AIR.
THE KIND OF MAGIC THAT CAN REKINDLE OLD FLAMES OF PASSION.
THE KIND OF MAGIC THAT CAN MAKE A RATIONAL MIND BELIEVE IN THINGS WHICH ARE BEYOND BELIEF.
BUT, UNFORTUNATELY FOR JOE NOTAFRAID AND ME, THIS WAS A DIFFERENT KIND OF MAGIC ENTIRELY. DARK MAGIC. DEADLY MAGIC.
THE MAGIC OF THE BLACK LEGION.

THE BLACK LEGION

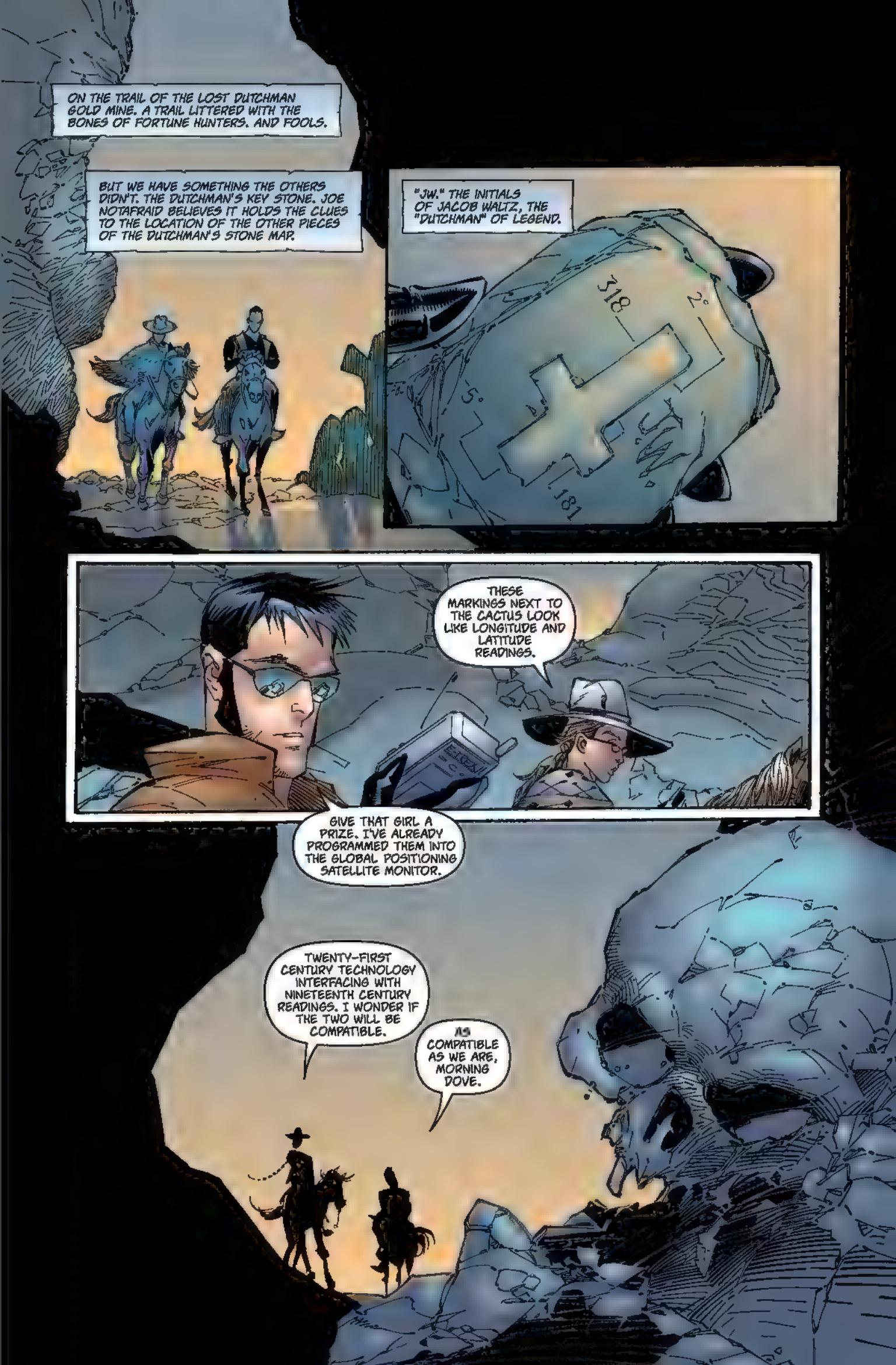
PART II OF III

WHO-AAH!
BNOF!
PHUNK

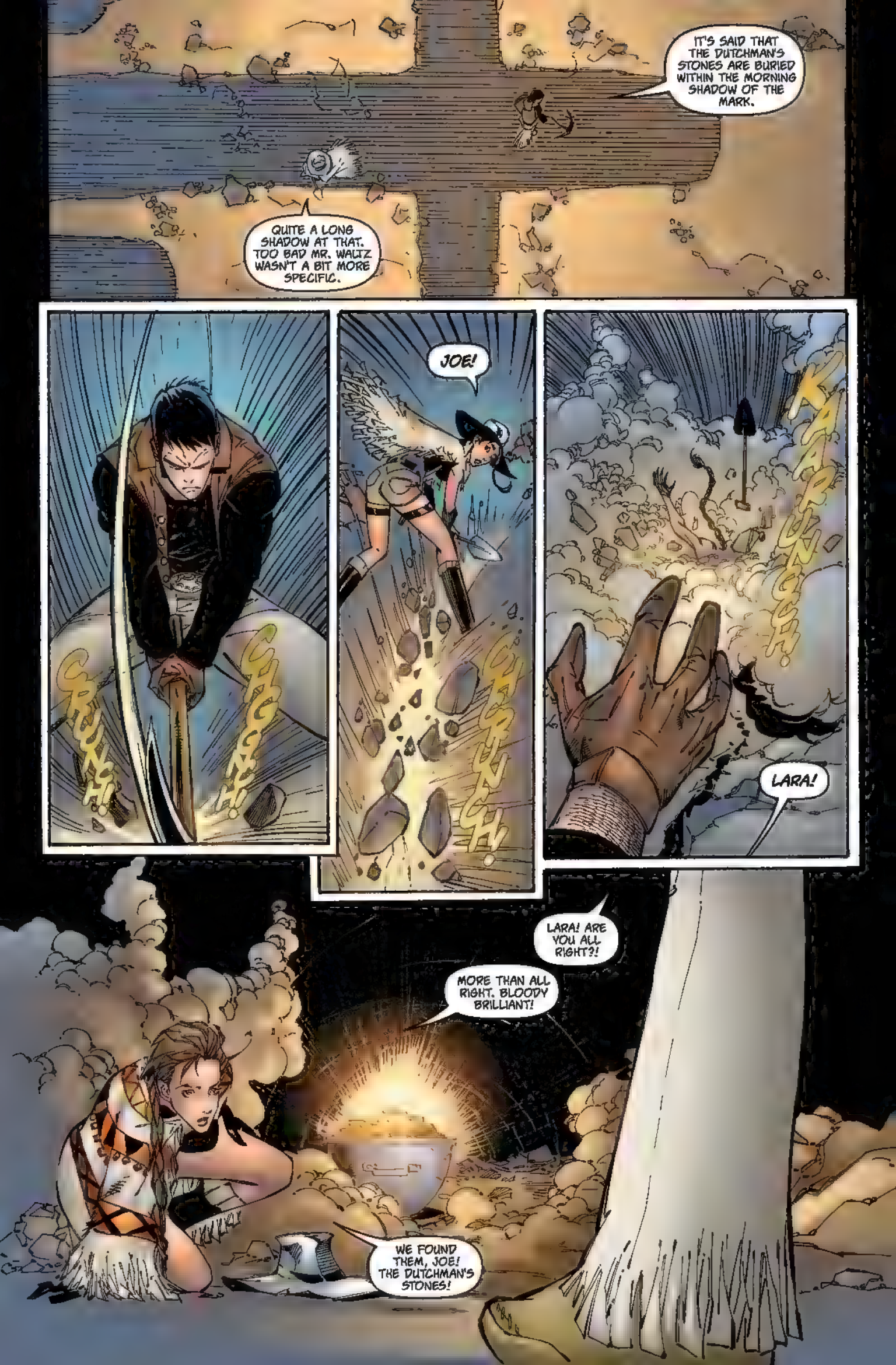

THE CRYSTAL...

GWAAAA!
THE BLACK LEGION! THEY DO EXIST!
THE OLD MEDICINE MAN SAID THE CRYSTAL WAS FOR PROTECTION. IT SEEMS HE WASN'T JUST BEING ENIGMATIC.
I GUESS THE OLD LEGENDS ABOUT THE SUPERSTITIONS ARE TRUE.
EVEN THE LEGEND OF THE THUNDER GOD?
WELL, LET'S JUST HOPE WE DON'T ENCOUNTER THE OLD BOY TONIGHT.
I FOR ONE COULD USE SOME BEAUTY SLEEP.

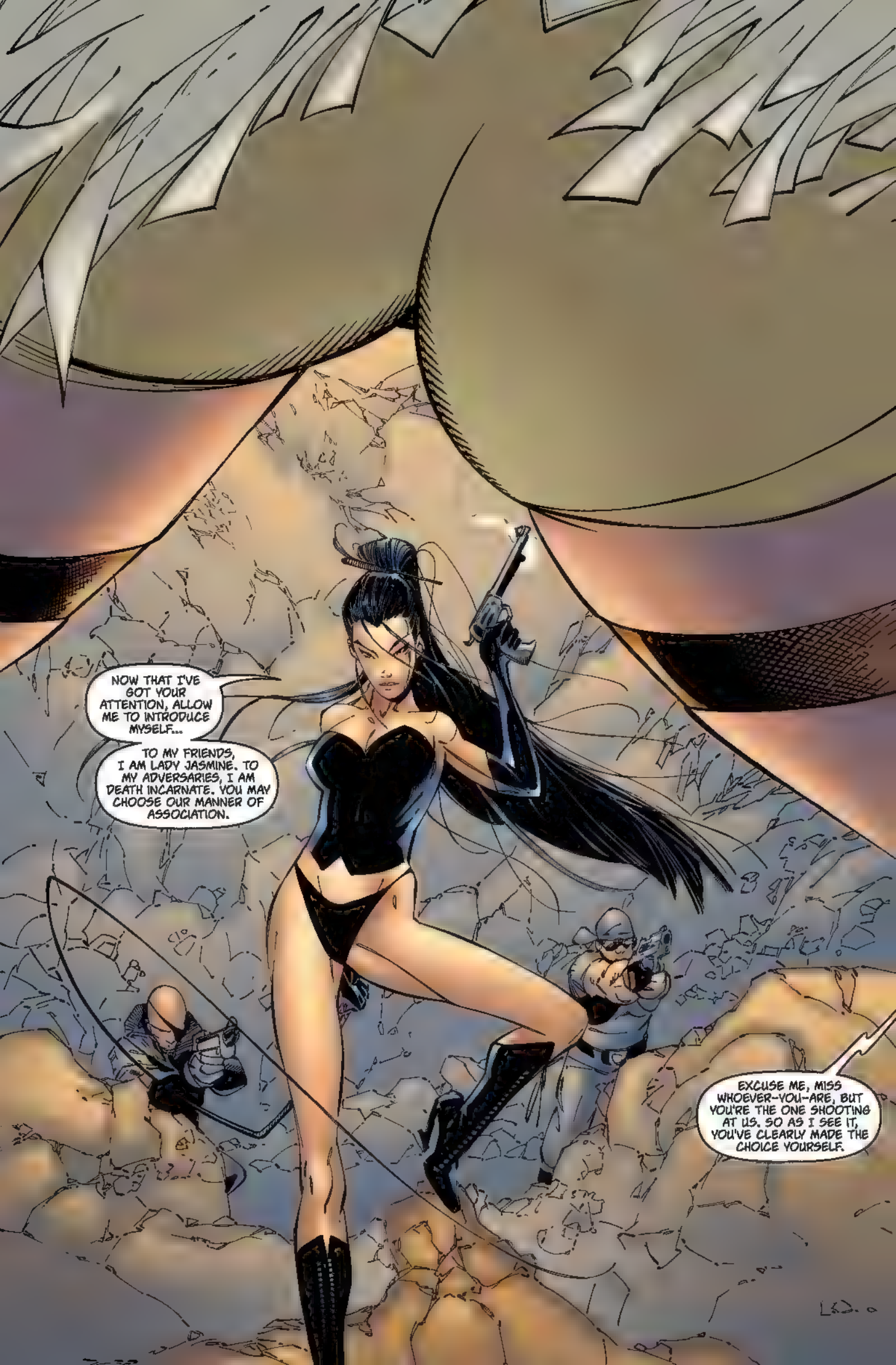
AH, LADY JASMINE... JAKE AND I BEEN TALKIN'...
SCINTILLATING CONVERSATION, NO DOUBT.
IT'S ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO NED LAST NIGHT, GETTIN' HIS HEAD CUT OFF AND ALL. AND WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO DONE IT.
JAKE AND ME THINK THAT MAYBE WE NEED A BIGGER BOAT.
MORE MEN, YOU KNOW. CASE THE GOIN' GETS TOUGHER.
SMAAACK-MAACK!
THERE ARE WORSE THINGS THAN LOSING YOUR HEAD.
TRY MY PATIENCE AGAIN AND I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT I MEAN.

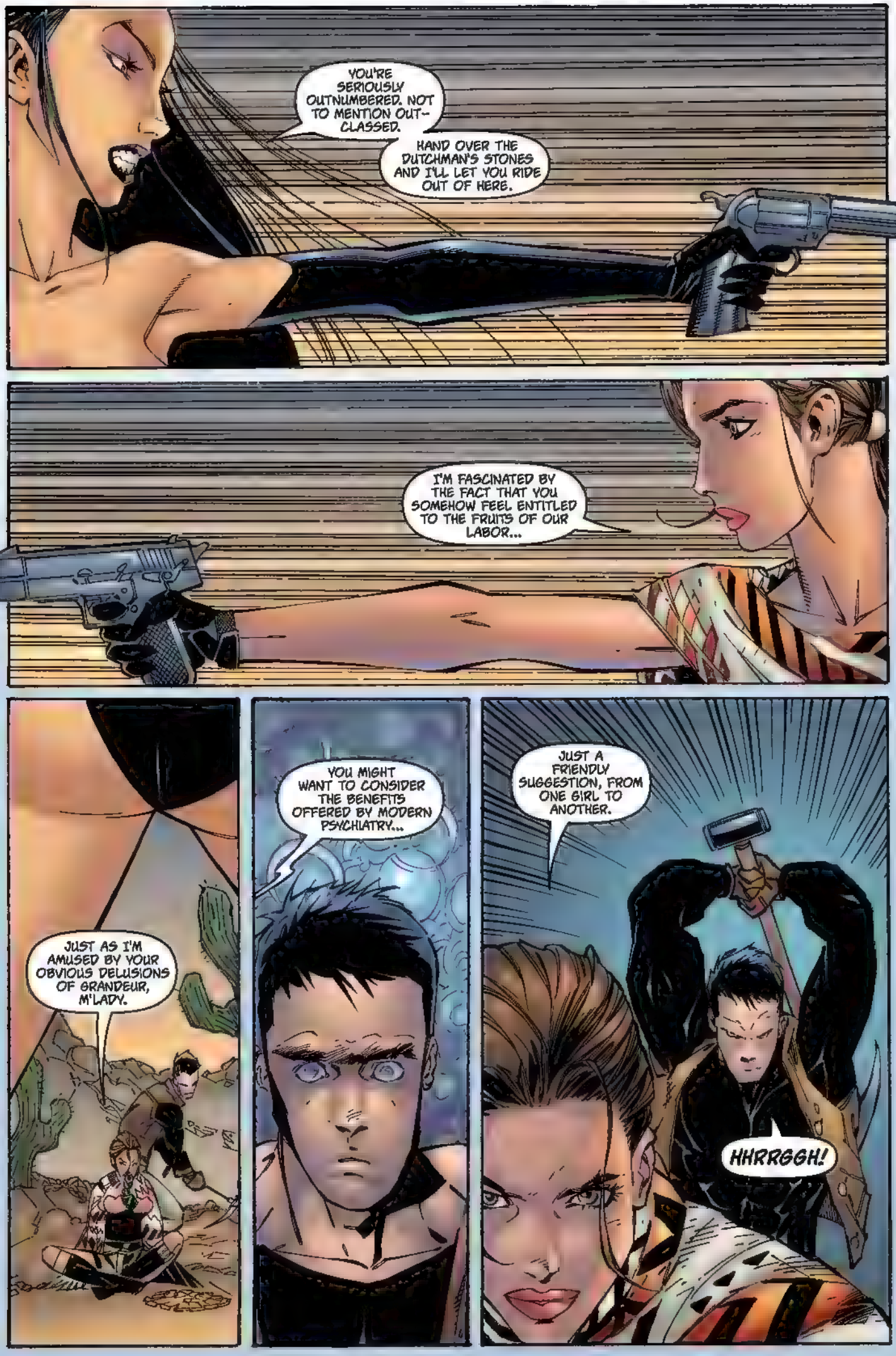

ON THE TRAIL OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE. A TRAIL LITTERED WITH THE BONES OF FORTUNE HUNTERS. AND FOOLS.
BUT WE HAVE SOMETHING THE OTHERS DIDN'T. THE DUTCHMAN'S KEY STONE. JOE NOTAFRAID BELIEVES IT HOLDS THE CLUES TO THE LOCATION OF THE OTHER PIECES OF THE DUTCHMAN'S STONE MAP.
"JW." THE INITIALS OF JACOB WALTZ, THE "DUTCHMAN" OF LEGEND.
318
2°
5°
181
THESE MARKINGS NEXT TO THE CACTUS LOOK LIKE LONGITUDE AND LATITUDE READINGS.
GIVE THAT GIRL A PRIZE. I'VE ALREADY PROGRAMMED THEM INTO THE GLOBAL POSITIONING SATELLITE MONITOR.
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY TECHNOLOGY INTERFACING WITH NINETEENTH CENTURY READINGS. I WONDER IF THE TWO WILL BE COMPATIBLE.
AS COMPATIBLE AS WE ARE, MORNING DOVE.

ACCORDING TO THE G.P.S., THIS IS THE AREA.
NOW ALL WE'VE GOTTA DO IS FIND THE DUTCHMAN'S MARK.
YES, THAT... AND DISCOVER THE LOST GOLD MINE. AND AVOID BEING MURDERED IN OUR SLEEP BY THE BLACK LEGION. IT'S ALMOST TOO EASY.
IT'S GOTTA BE CARVED INTO SOMETHING. MOST LIKELY ONE OF THOSE BOULDERS.
I'M NOT SO SURE...
SAGUAROS. THE SENTINELS OF THE DESERT. THEY LIVE FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, DEFYING THE HELLISH ELEMENTS.
BUT JACOB WALTZ WOULD HAVE WANTED HIS MARK TO SURVIVE AS LONG AS IT COULD, SO HE WOULD HAVE CHOSEN A YOUNG CACTUS, WHICH WOULD LIVE ON FOR CENTURIES...
AND GROW...

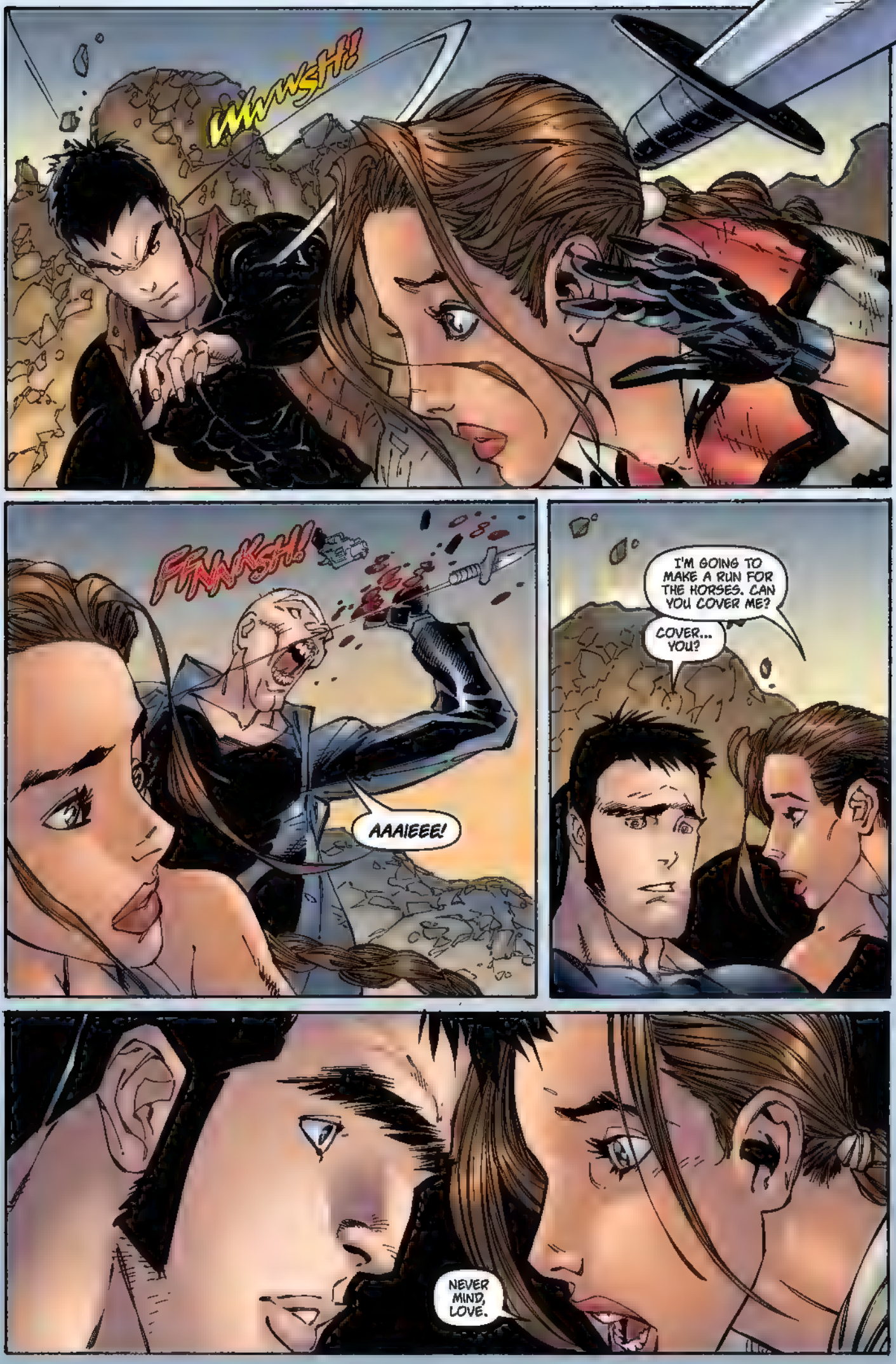

IT'S SAID THAT THE DUTCHMAN'S STONES ARE BURIED WITHIN THE MORNING SHADOW OF THE MARK.
QUITE A LONG SHADOW AT THAT. TOO BAD MR. WALTZ WASN'T A BIT MORE SPECIFIC.
CRUNCH!
CHGGNCH!
JOE!
CHCRUNCH!
KAARUNGCH!
LARA!
LARA! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
MORE THAN ALL RIGHT. BLOODY BRILLIANT!
WE FOUND THEM, JOE! THE DUTCHMAN'S STONES!

YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE TO SHARE THIS JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY WITH ME! IT'S DESTINY!
OH, SOD OFF, NOTAFRAID. YOU ONLY WANTED TO GET ME ALONE IN THE MOUNTAINS, HOPING I'D LET MY GUARD DOWN.
YOU ALWAYS COULD SEE RIGHT THROUGH ME, MORNING DOVE.
THESE ETCHINGS ARE CLEARLY LANDMARKS. THERE'S THREE RED HILLS AND WEAVER'S NEEDLE...
YES, JOE, BUT THERE ARE NO MARKINGS INDICATING WHERE THE GOLD MINE LIES...
WAIT! THE KEY STONE!
THE "FOOL'S GOLD" ENCRUSTED IN THE KEY STONE...
IT'S SHINING ON WINDOW ROCK AND BLACKTOP MOUNTAIN...
BUT ALL POINTS OF LIGHT CONVERGE ON...
KA-CHOW!
BZING!


NOW THAT I'VE GOT YOUR ATTENTION, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...
TO MY FRIENDS, I AM LADY JASMINE. TO MY ADVERSARIES, I AM DEATH INCARNATE. YOU MAY CHOOSE OUR MANNER OF ASSOCIATION.
EXCUSE ME, MISS WHOEVER-YOU-ARE, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE SHOOTING AT US. SO AS I SEE IT, YOU'VE CLEARLY MADE THE CHOICE YOURSELF.

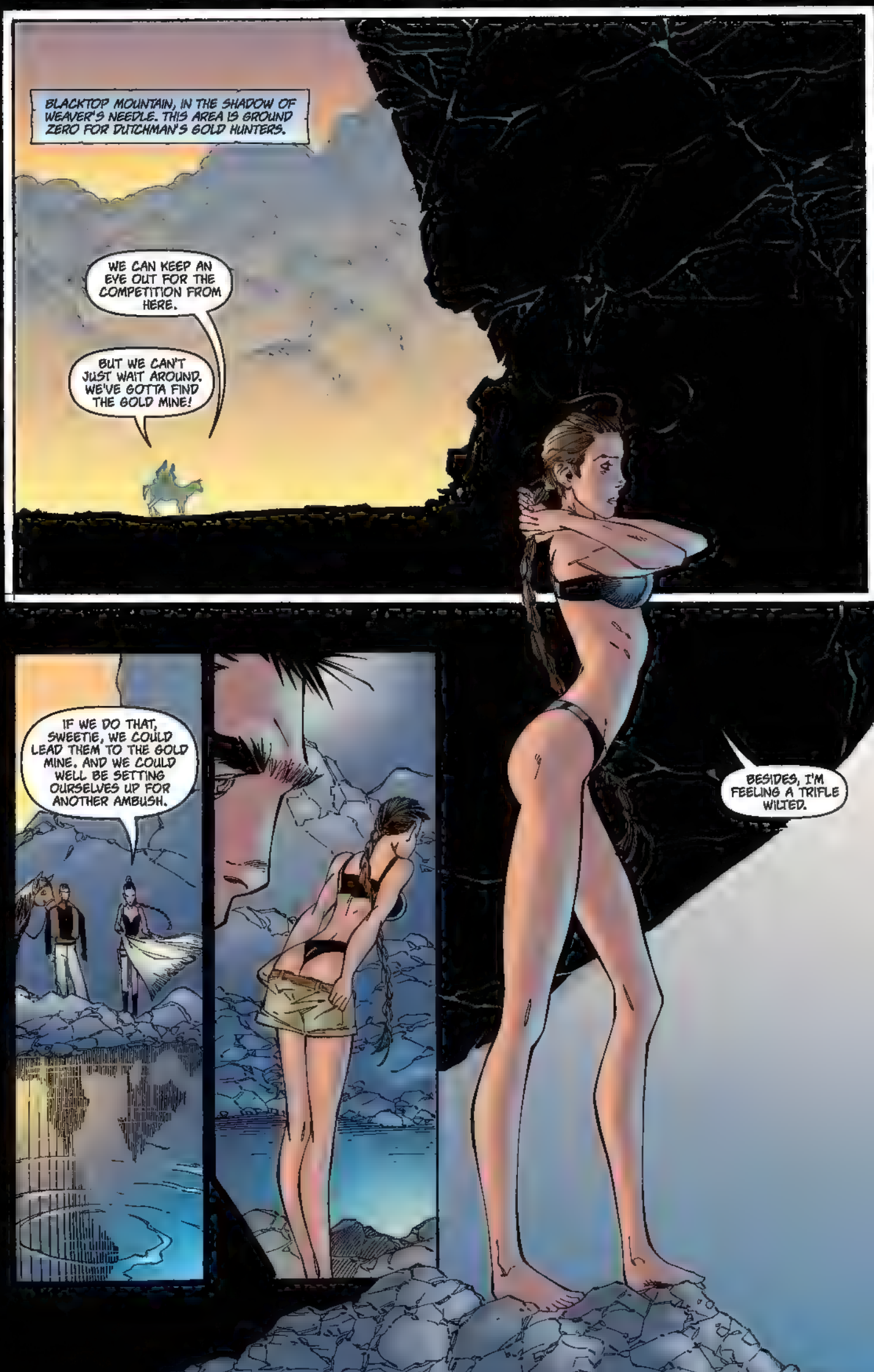

YOU'RE SERIOUSLY OUTNUMBERED. NOT TO MENTION OUT-CLASSED.
HAND OVER THE DUTCHMAN'S STONES AND I'LL LET YOU RIDE OUT OF HERE.
I'M FASCINATED BY THE FACT THAT YOU SOMEHOW FEEL ENTITLED TO THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOR...
JUST AS I'M AMUSED BY YOUR OBVIOUS DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR, M'LADY.
YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER THE BENEFITS OFFERED BY MODERN PSYCHIATRY...
JUST A FRIENDLY SUGGESTION, FROM ONE GIRL TO ANOTHER.
HHRRGGH!

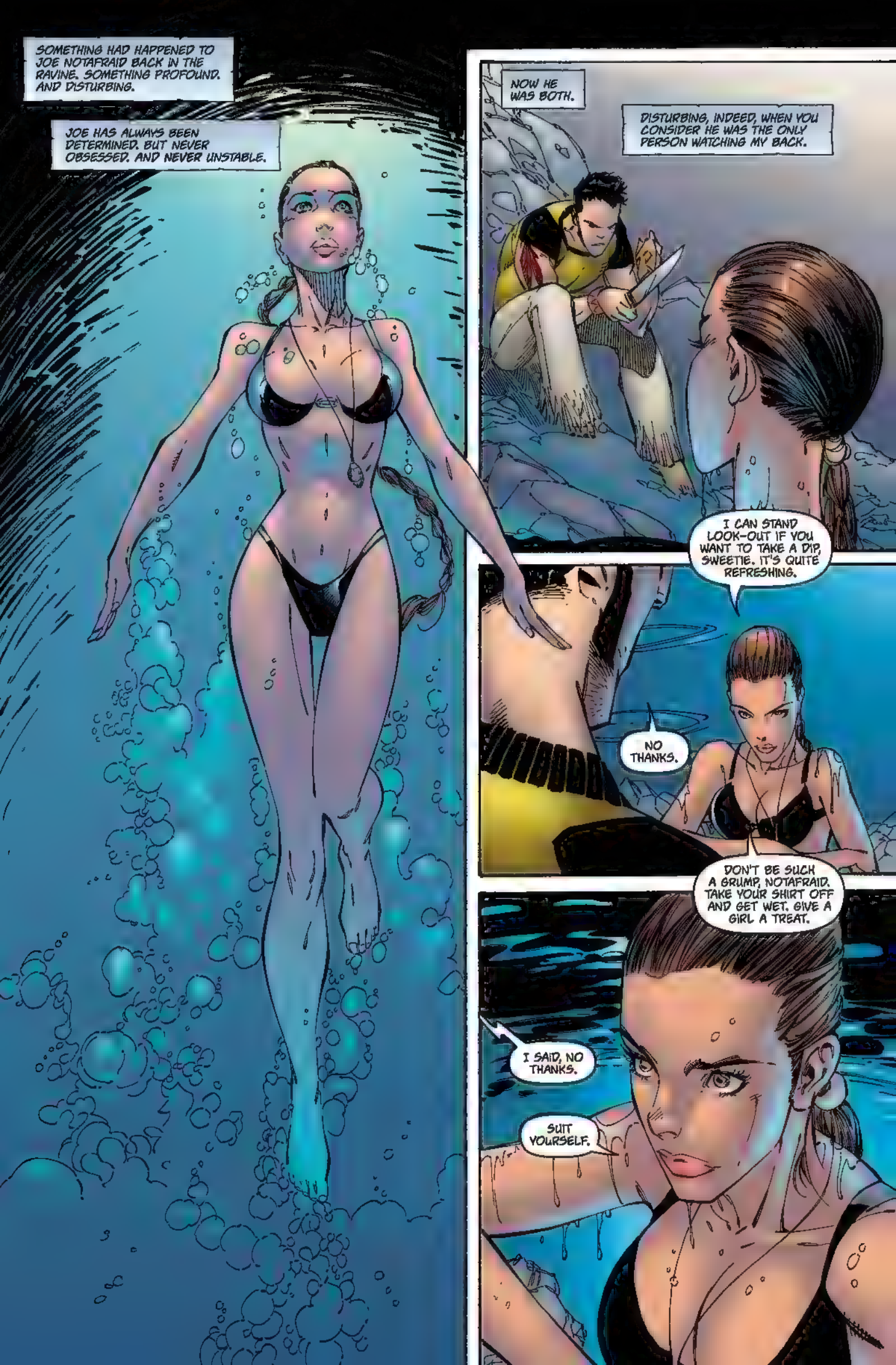
KRUUNCH!
BAAUCH!
JOE?!
KRAUNCH!
AARRRRH!
JOE!
STOP!
WOOMPH!
LET 'EM HAVE IT, BOYS!
KAA-CHOW! KAA-CHOW!
THOSE STONES ARE HISTORICAL RELICS! YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO DESTROY THEM!
I DID... WHAT?

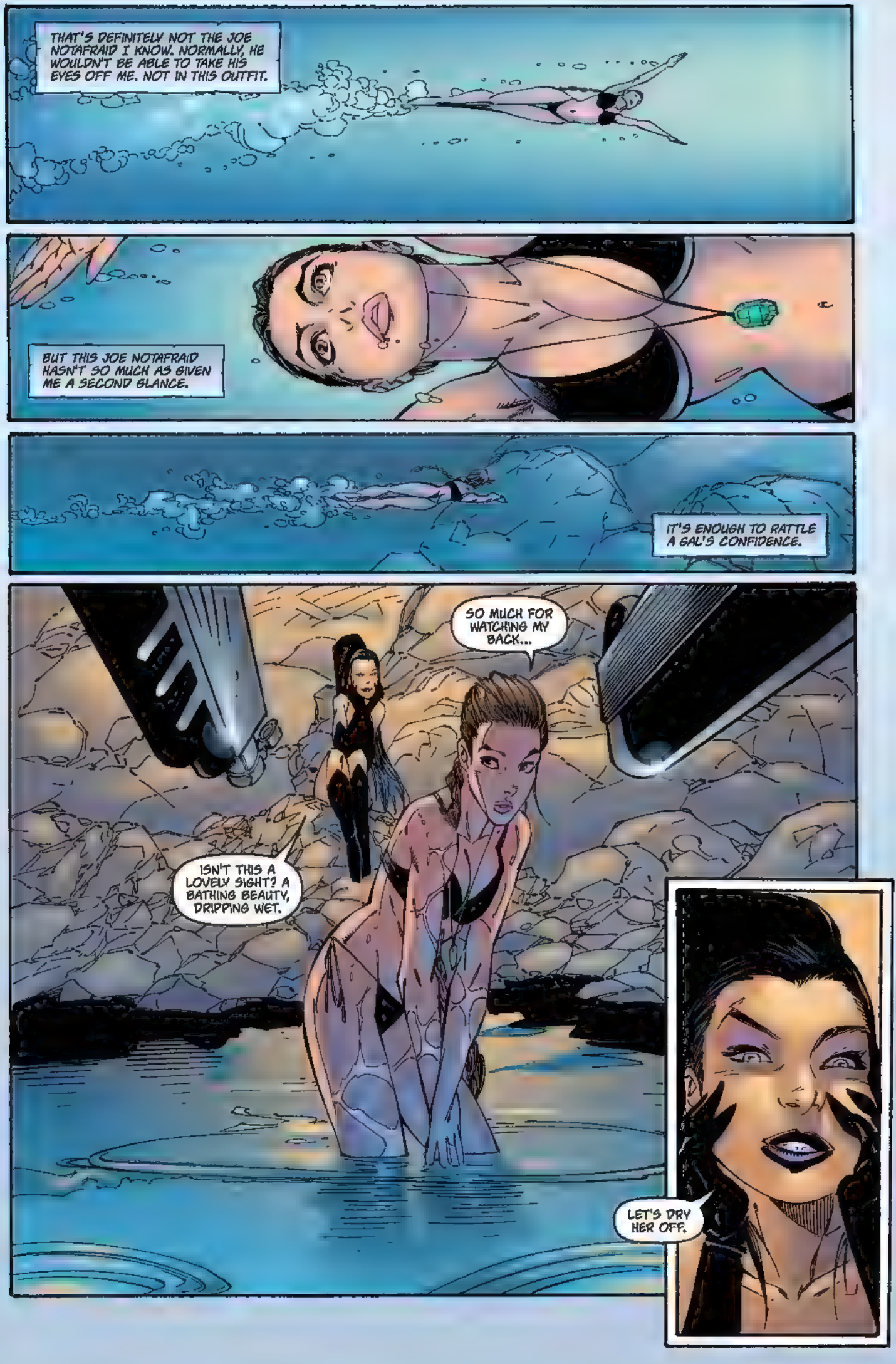

WWWSH!
FFWKSH!
AAAIEEE!
I'M GOING TO MAKE A RUN FOR THE HORSES. CAN YOU COVER ME?
COVER... YOU?
NEVER MIND, LOVE.

VZING!
VZING!
VZING!
RRUMBLE!
RRBLRRBLRRBLR!
LOOK OUT, YOU FOOL!
AAAARRH!

GIDDYUP!
BBDDA BBUP!
BBDDABBUP!
JOE! HEADS UP!
ADIOS AMIGOS.
FOR NOW.

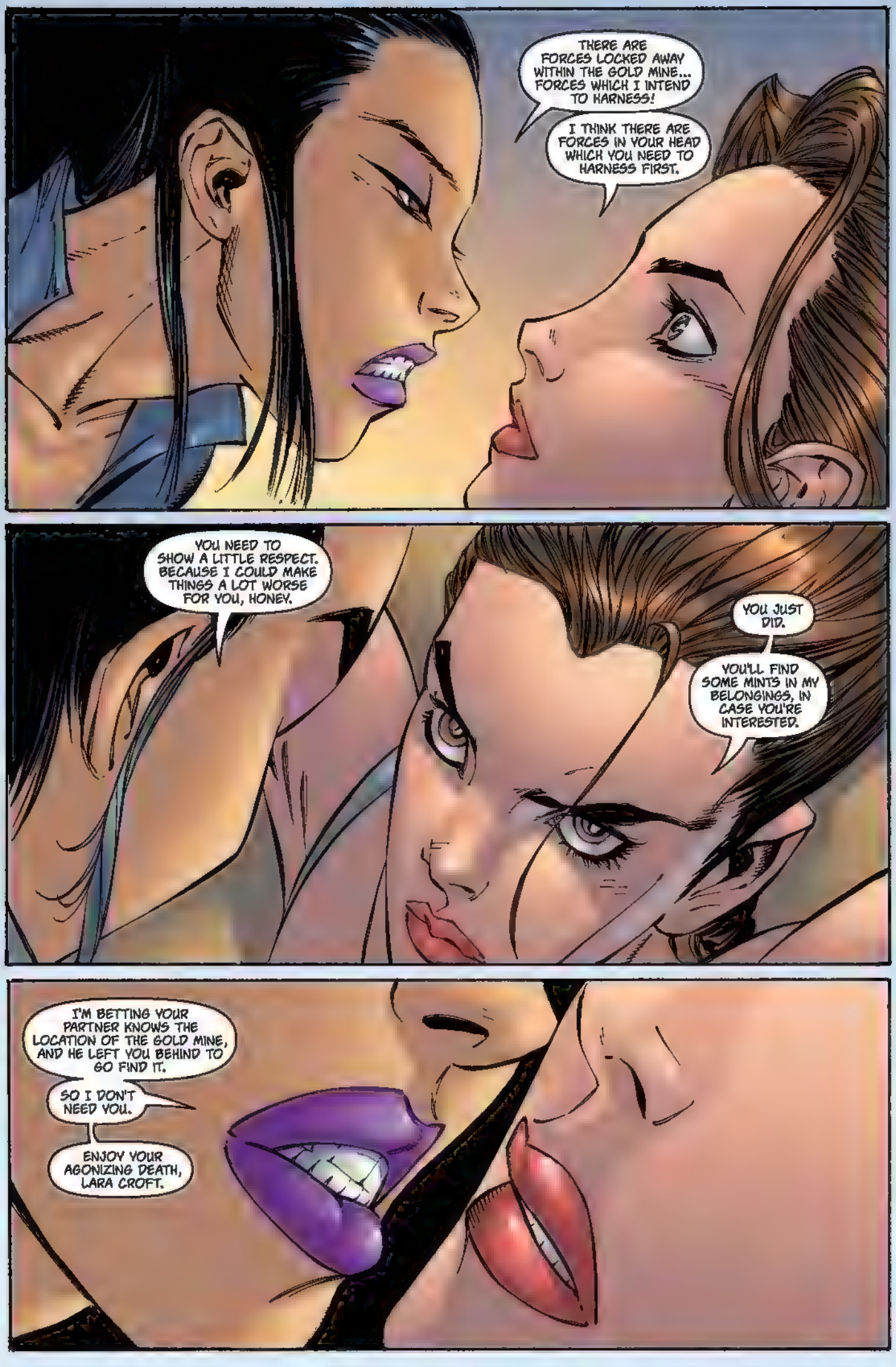

BLACKTOP MOUNTAIN, IN THE SHADOW OF WEAVER'S NEEDLE. THIS AREA IS GROUND ZERO FOR DUTCHMAN'S GOLD HUNTERS.
WE CAN KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE COMPETITION FROM HERE.
BUT WE CAN'T JUST WAIT AROUND. WE'VE GOTTA FIND THE GOLD MINE!
IF WE DO THAT, SWEETIE, WE COULD LEAD THEM TO THE GOLD MINE. AND WE COULD WELL BE SETTING OURSELVES UP FOR ANOTHER AMBUSH.
BESIDES, I'M FEELING A TRIFLE WILTED.


SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO JOE NOTAFRAID BACK IN THE RAVINE. SOMETHING PROFOUND. AND DISTURBING.
JOE HAS ALWAYS BEEN DETERMINED. BUT NEVER OBSESSED. AND NEVER UNSTABLE.
NOW HE WAS BOTH.
DISTURBING, INDEED, WHEN YOU CONSIDER HE WAS THE ONLY PERSON WATCHING MY BACK.
I CAN STAND LOOK-OUT IF YOU WANT TO TAKE A DIP, SWEETIE. IT'S QUITE REFRESHING.
NO THANKS.
DON'T BE SUCH A GRUMP, NOTAFRAID. TAKE YOUR SHIRT OFF AND GET WET. GIVE A GIRL A TREAT.
I SAID, NO THANKS.
SUIT YOURSELF.


THAT'S DEFINITELY NOT THE JOE NOTAFRAID I KNOW. NORMALLY, HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TAKE HIS EYES OFF ME. NOT IN THIS OUTFIT.
BUT THIS JOE NOTAFRAID HASN'T SO MUCH AS GIVEN ME A SECOND GLANCE.
IT'S ENOUGH TO RATTLE A GAL'S CONFIDENCE.
SO MUCH FOR WATCHING MY BACK...
ISN'T THIS A LOVELY SIGHT? A BATHING BEAUTY, DRIPPING WET.
LET'S DRY HER OFF.

LARA CROFT. NOW WHY DOES THAT NAME SOUND FAMILIAR?
YOU'LL NO DOUBT REMEMBER IT A LONG TIME. THAT IS, IF YOU SURVIVE THE DAY.

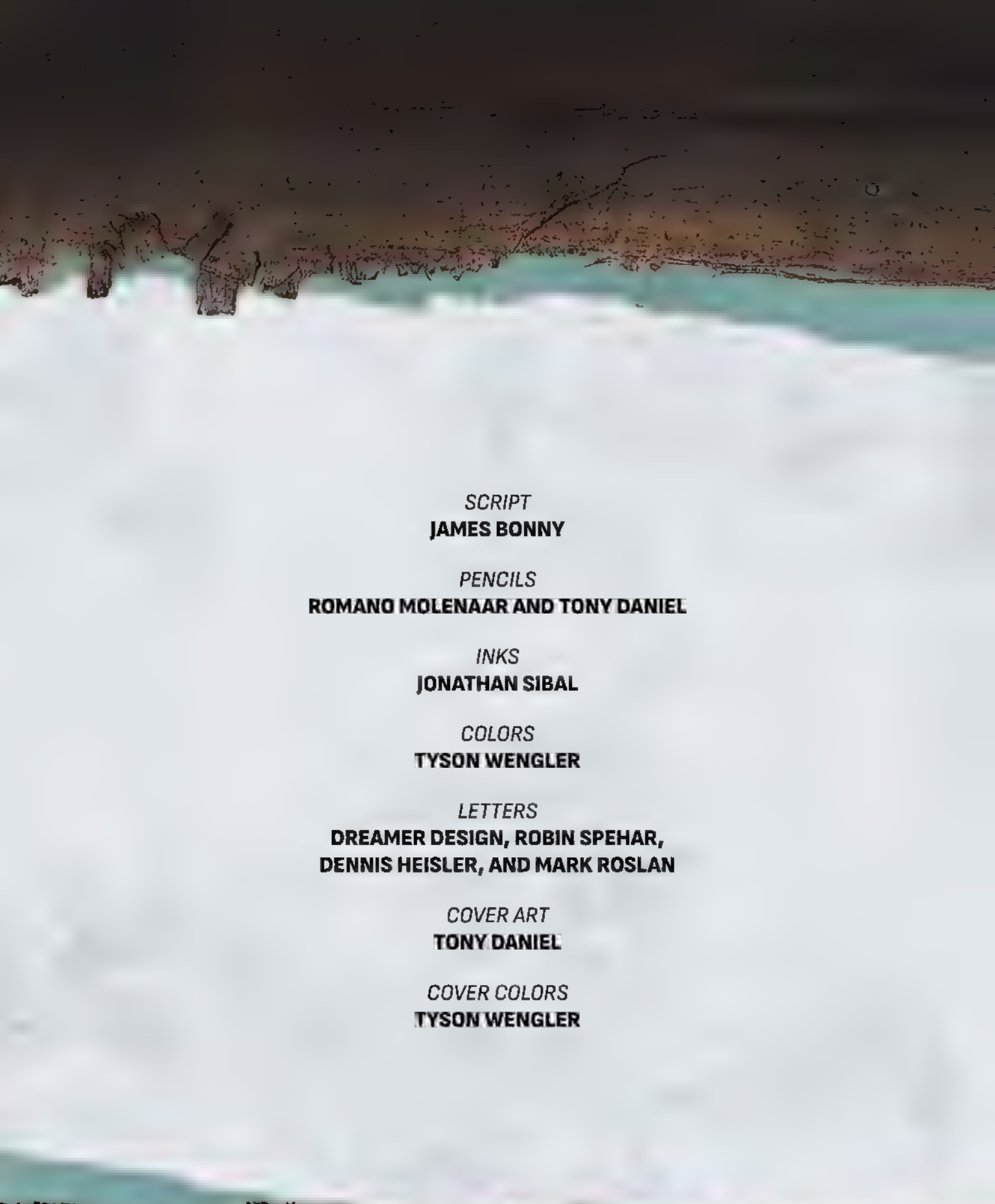
I LIKE A WOMAN WITH CONFIDENCE. A STRONG WOMAN WHO KNOWS WHAT SHE WANTS, AND DOESN'T HAVE TO RELY ON A MAN TO GET IT.
IT'S A SHAME WE HAD TO MEET UNDER THESE UNPLEASANT CIRCUMSTANCES. WE HAVE A LOT IN COMMON, YOU AND I.
HARDLY. APART FROM YOUR SELF-APPOINTED TITLE, "LADY."
AN HONOR BESTOWED UPON ME BY THE MANY MEN WHO BOTH RESPECT AND FEAR ME. MEN WHO LIVE OR DIE BY MY COMMAND.
YOU HAVE THAT IN COMMON WITH THEM NOW. BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW, YOU'LL DIE AN EXCRUCIATING DEATH OUT HERE.
THE LOCATION OF THE GOLD MINE. I WANT IT.
YOU AND EVERY OTHER FORTUNE HUNTER.
OH, YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG. I'M NOT HERE FOR THE FORTUNE.
I'M HERE FOR THE POWER.


THERE ARE FORCES LOCKED AWAY WITHIN THE GOLD MINE... FORCES WHICH I INTEND TO HARNESS!
I THINK THERE ARE FORCES IN YOUR HEAD WHICH YOU NEED TO HARNESS FIRST.
YOU NEED TO SHOW A LITTLE RESPECT. BECAUSE I COULD MAKE THINGS A LOT WORSE FOR YOU, HONEY.
YOU JUST DID.
YOU'LL FIND SOME MINTS IN MY BELONGINGS, IN CASE YOU'RE INTERESTED.
I'M BETTING YOUR PARTNER KNOWS THE LOCATION OF THE GOLD MINE, AND HE LEFT YOU BEHIND TO GO FIND IT.
SO I DON'T NEED YOU.
ENJOY YOUR AGONIZING DEATH, LARA CROFT.

SHUFF SHUFF
FSSK!
SHUFF... LADY... JASMINE?
WWWSSKFA!
ARGGGGHA!

EVEN IF JOE NOTAFRAID HAS CHANGED...
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE WOULD CHOOSE GOLD OVER ME.
IF I KNOW JOE NOTAFRAID AT ALL, I'M CERTAIN HE'LL COME BACK...
GGRRLL!
I ONLY HOPE IT'S QUITE SOON.
TO BE CONTINUED...

TONY DANIEL
'03
tw



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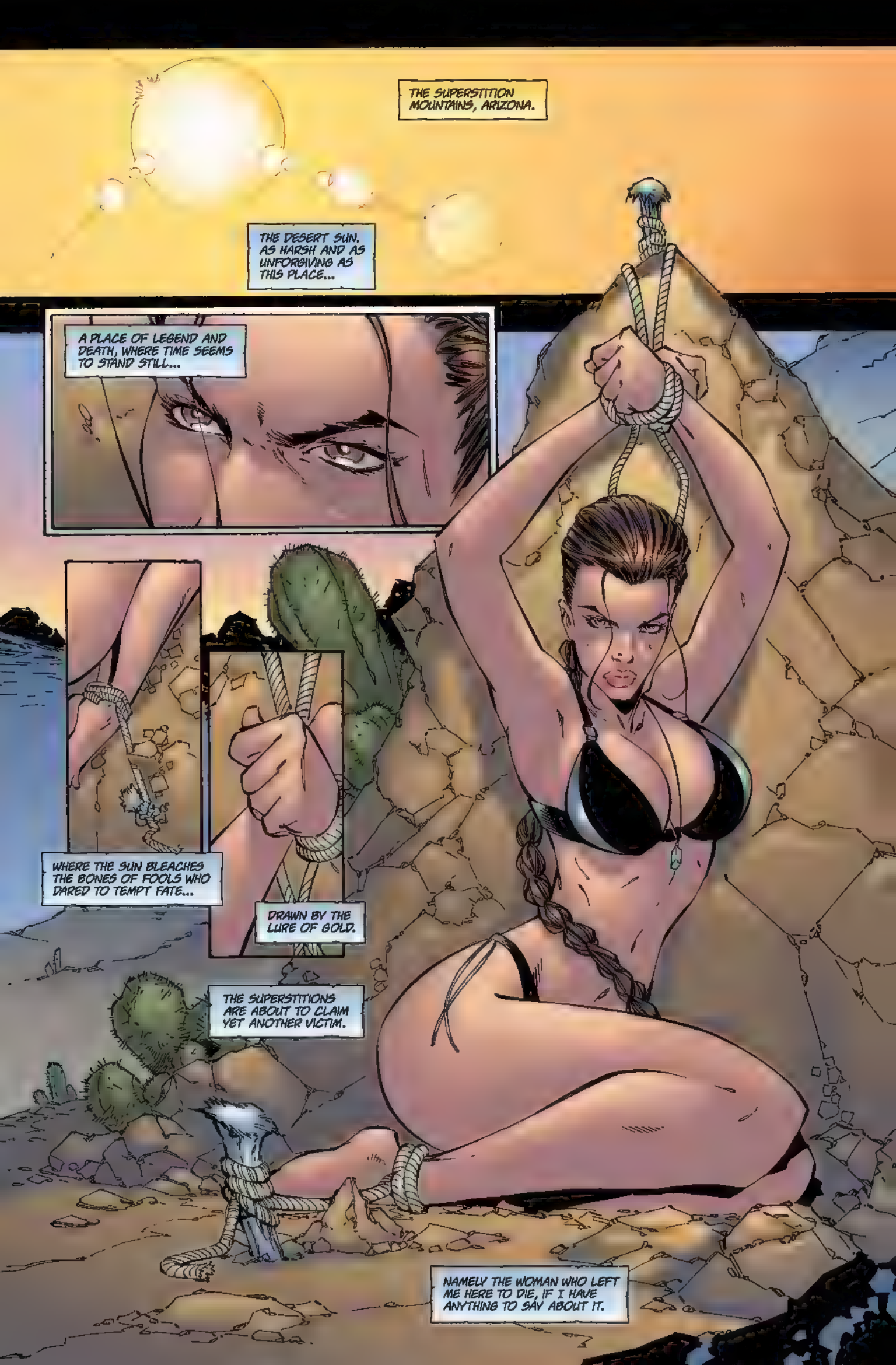
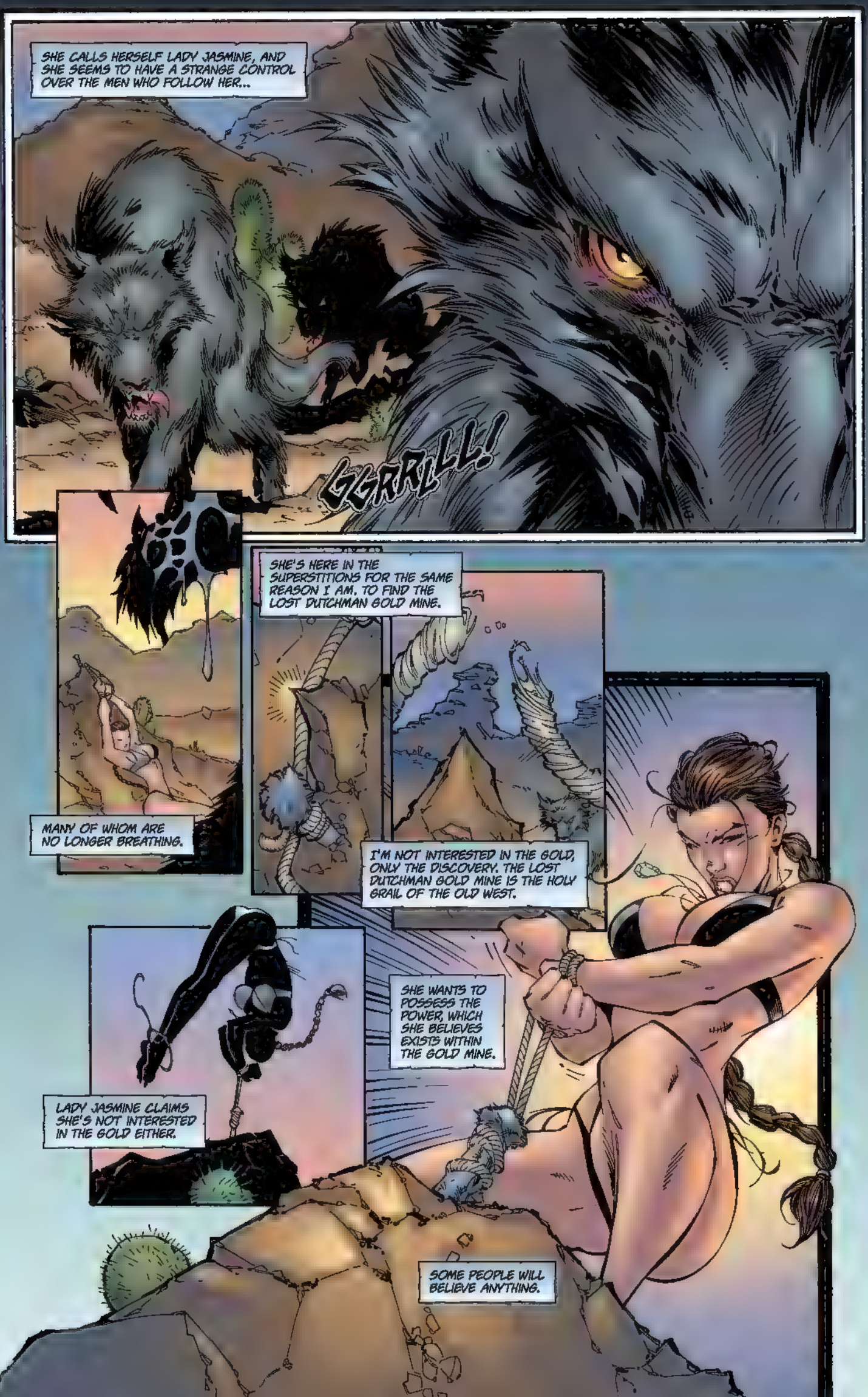
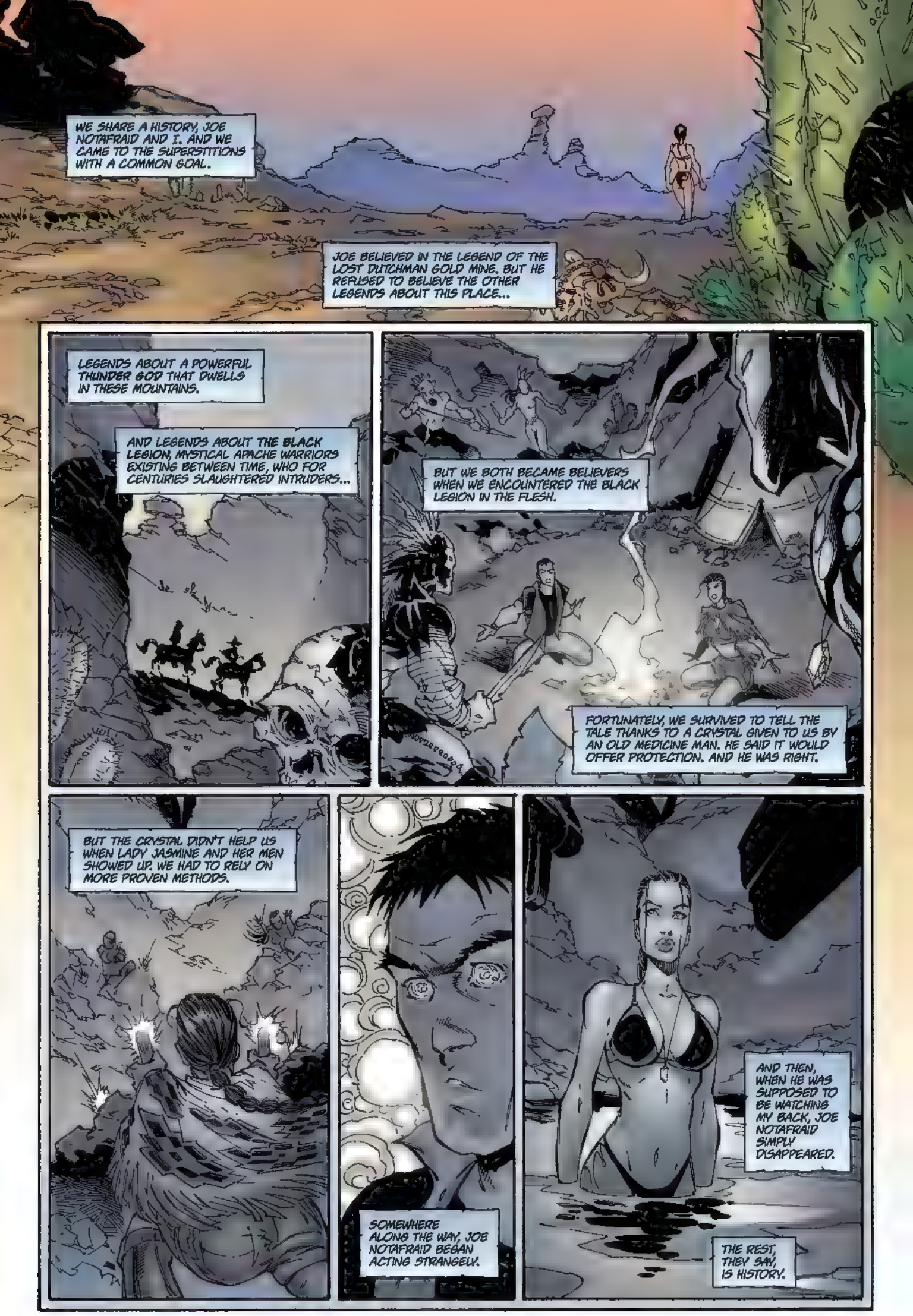

THE SUPERSTITION MOUNTAINS, ARIZONA.
THE DESERT SUN. AS HARSH AND AS UNFORGIVING AS THIS PLACE...
A PLACE OF LEGEND AND DEATH, WHERE TIME SEEMS TO STAND STILL...
WHERE THE SUN BLEACHES THE BONES OF FOOLS WHO DARED TO TEMPT FATE...
DRAWN BY THE LURE OF GOLD.
THE SUPERSTITIONS ARE ABOUT TO CLAIM YET ANOTHER VICTIM.
NAMELY THE WOMAN WHO LEFT ME HERE TO DIE, IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT.


SHE CALLS HERSELF LADY JASMINE, AND SHE SEEMS TO HAVE A STRANGE CONTROL OVER THE MEN WHO FOLLOW HER...
GRRLL!
MANY OF WHOM ARE NO LONGER BREATHING.
SHE'S HERE IN THE SUPERSTITIONS FOR THE SAME REASON I AM. TO FIND THE LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE.
I'M NOT INTERESTED IN THE GOLD, ONLY THE DISCOVERY. THE LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE IS THE HOLY GRAIL OF THE OLD WEST.
LADY JASMINE CLAIMS SHE'S NOT INTERESTED IN THE GOLD EITHER.
SHE WANTS TO POSSESS THE POWER, WHICH SHE BELIEVES EXISTS WITHIN THE GOLD MINE.
SOME PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE ANYTHING.

BONK!
NOW THAT I'VE TAKEN CARE OF THE SCAVENGERS, IT'S TIME TO TRACK DOWN THE VERMIN WHO RODE OFF ON MY HORSE.
AND THEN I'VE GOT TO FIND JOE NOTAFRAID.
AYY AYY AYY!
THE BLACK LEGION
PART III OF III


WE SHARE A HISTORY, JOE NOTAFRAID AND I. AND WE CAME TO THE SUPERSTITIONS WITH A COMMON GOAL.
JOE BELIEVED IN THE LEGEND OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE. BUT HE REFUSED TO BELIEVE THE OTHER LEGENDS ABOUT THIS PLACE...
LEGENDS ABOUT A POWERFUL THUNDER GOD THAT DWELLS IN THESE MOUNTAINS.
AND LEGENDS ABOUT THE BLACK LEGION, MYSTICAL APACHE WARRIORS EXISTING BETWEEN TIME, WHO FOR CENTURIES SLAUGHTERED INTRUDERS...
BUT WE BOTH BECAME BELIEVERS WHEN WE ENCOUNTERED THE BLACK LEGION IN THE FLESH.
FORTUNATELY, WE SURVIVED TO TELL THE TALE THANKS TO A CRYSTAL GIVEN TO US BY AN OLD MEDICINE MAN. HE SAID IT WOULD OFFER PROTECTION. AND HE WAS RIGHT.
BUT THE CRYSTAL DIDN'T HELP US WHEN LADY JASMINE AND HER MEN SHOWED UP. WE HAD TO RELY ON MORE PROVEN METHODS.
SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, JOE NOTAFRAID BEGAN ACTING STRANGELY.
AND THEN, WHEN HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE WATCHING MY BACK, JOE NOTAFRAID SIMPLY DISAPPEARED.
THE REST, THEY SAY, IS HISTORY.

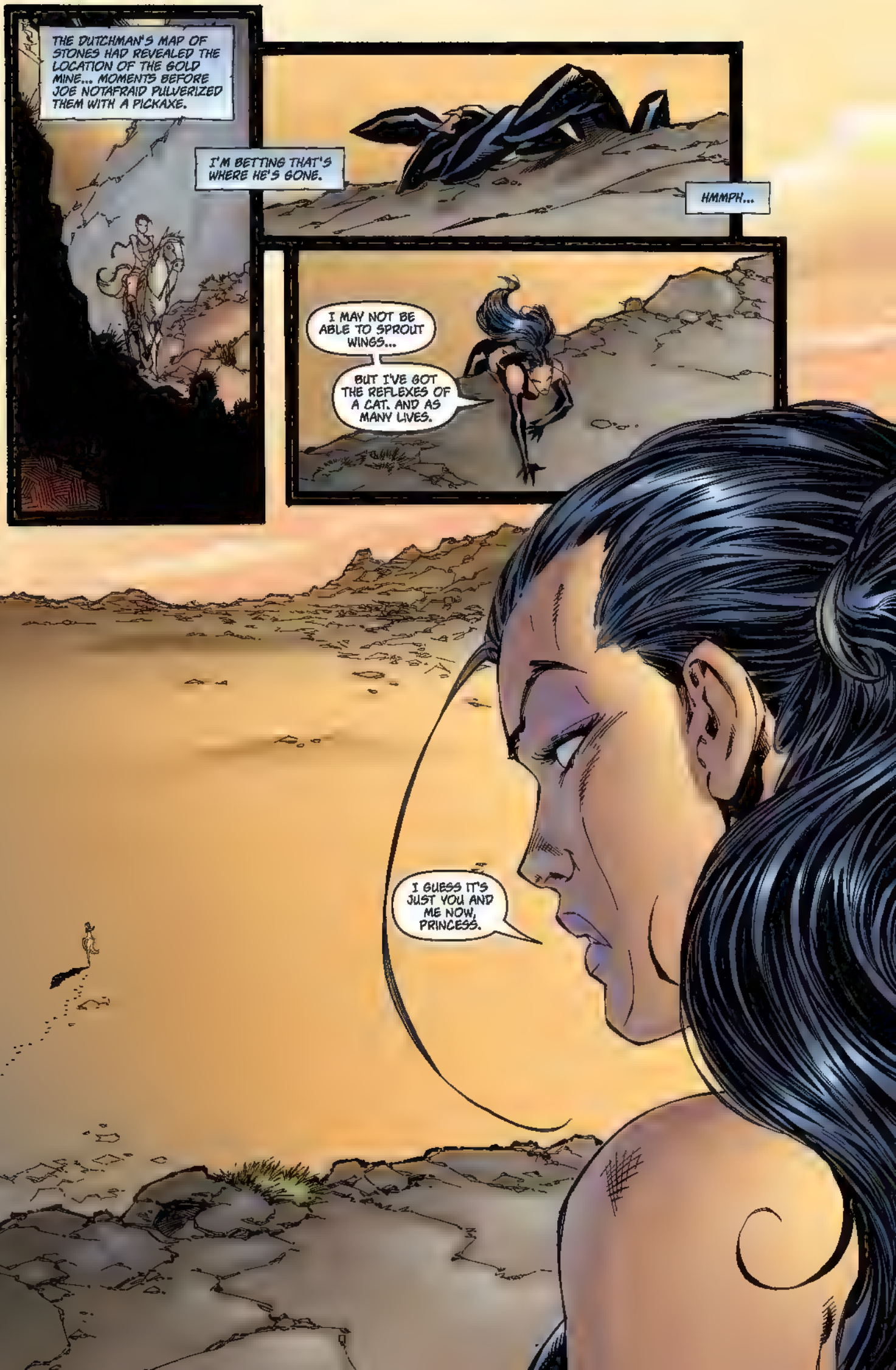
NOW, I WAS DRIVEN NOT BY CURIOSITY... BUT BY REVENGE.
ONE OF LADY JASMINE'S MEN. OR RATHER, WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM.
IT SEEMS THAT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE ON LADY JASMINE'S TRAIL.
I WONDER IF THE BLACK LEGION WILL GET TO HER BEFORE I DO.

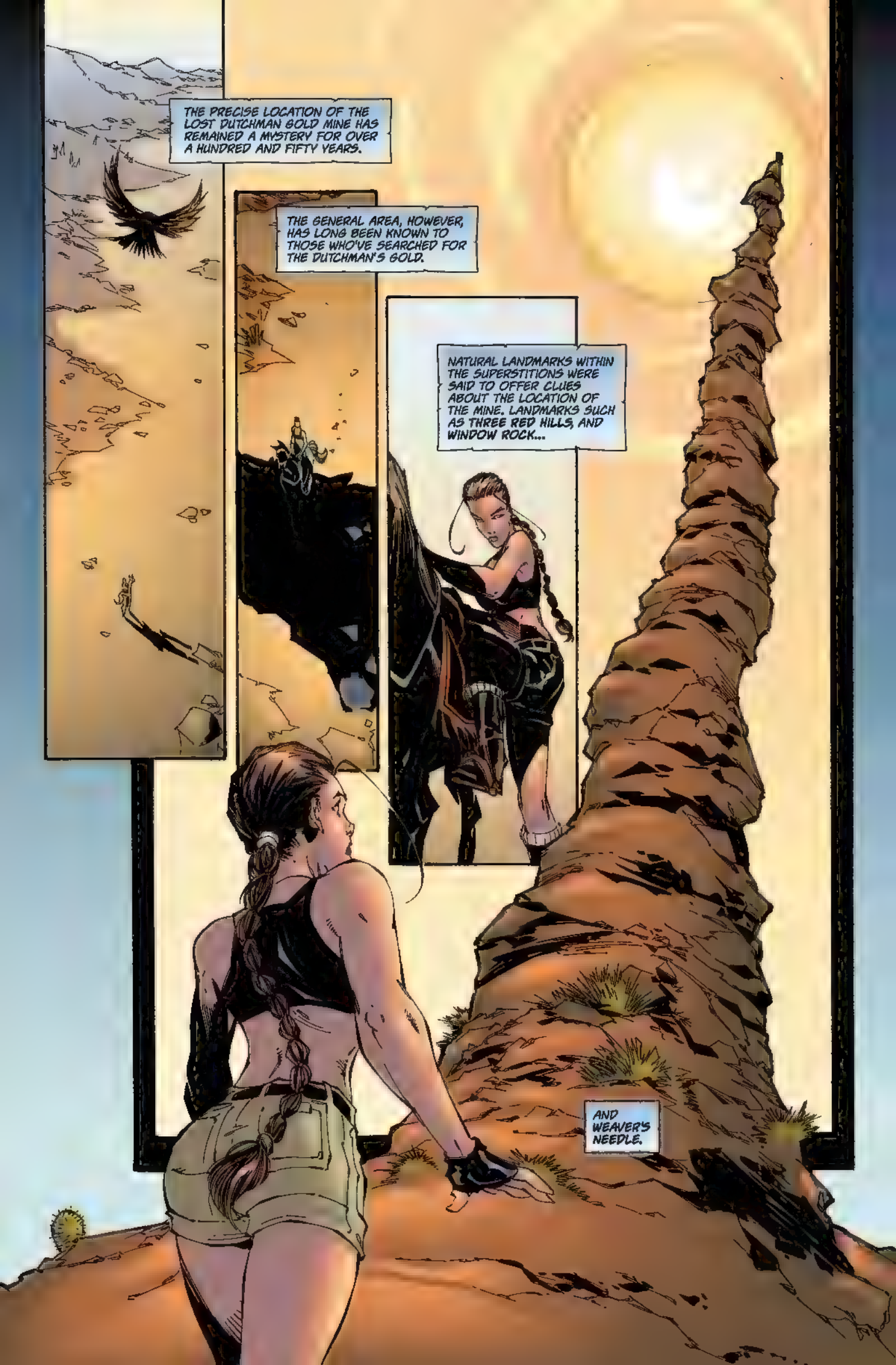
LADY JASMINE...! I CAN'T FIND WILLIS! HE JUST AIN'T BACK THERE!
FORGET ABOUT HIM, FOOL! WE'VE GOT TO FIND NOTAFRAID!
THE ONLY REASON HE'D LEAVE THE PRINCESS BEHIND IS BECAUSE HE WANTED THE GOLD FOR HIMSELF.
AND HE KNEW WHERE IT WAS.
WSHAWSH!
WSHAWSH!
WOHUNK!
LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY WANTS TO PLAY.

BOOAM! BOOM!
LET'S PLAY!
BOOAM!
VVZ! ZHNG! VVHNG!
BOOAM! BOOM! BOOAM!
SOUNDS AS THOUGH THE BLACK LEGION GOT TO HER FIRST.
PITY.

CLIK!
BOAM!
CLIK!
CLIK!
BOOAM!
CLIK!
BOOAM!
PHUFNKSH!
I'M NOT GOING ALONE, SO WHO'S COMING WITH ME?
BWWP!
HOW ABOUT YOU, BEEFCAKE?
KAAW! KAAW!
THAT'S SOME TRICK, SIEGFRIED.

WWSH!
WELL THAT TAKES CARE OF ONE PROBLEM.
GUNS CAN'T COMBAT THE MYSTICAL POWERS OF THE BLACK LEGION.
BUT THE CRYSTAL...
THE CRYSTAL PROTECTS ME. BUT THE OLD MEDICINE MAN GAVE IT TO JOE NOTAFRAID, WHO THEN GAVE IT TO ME.
WWOOSSH!
COULD THERE BE SOMETHING ELSE HERE THAT THE CRYSTAL WARDS OFF? AND IS THAT WHY THE BLACK LEGION WARRIORS WEAR THEM AS WELL? FOR PROTECTION?


THE DUTCHMAN'S MAP OF STONES HAD REVEALED THE LOCATION OF THE GOLD MINE... MOMENTS BEFORE JOE NOTAFRAID PULVERIZED THEM WITH A PICKAXE.
I'M BETTING THAT'S WHERE HE'S GONE.
HMMPH...
I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SPROUT WINGS...
BUT I'VE GOT THE REFLEXES OF A CAT. AND AS MANY LIVES.
I GUESS IT'S JUST YOU AND ME NOW, PRINCESS.


THE PRECISE LOCATION OF THE LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE HAS REMAINED A MYSTERY FOR OVER A HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS.
THE GENERAL AREA, HOWEVER, HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN TO THOSE WHO'VE SEARCHED FOR THE DUTCHMAN'S GOLD.
NATURAL LANDMARKS WITHIN THE SUPERSTITIONS WERE SAID TO OFFER CLUES ABOUT THE LOCATION OF THE MINE. LANDMARKS SUCH AS THREE RED HILLS, AND WINDOW ROCK...
AND WEAVER'S NEEDLE.

HOW MANY HOLES HAVE BEEN DUG HERE IN VAIN?
HOW MANY DYNAMITE BLASTS HAVE TORN THROUGH THE EARTH?
BECAUSE EVERYBODY ASSUMED THE GOLD WAS BELOW.
NOT ABOVE.
THAT'S WHY THEY ALL FAILED. THAT'S WHY THEIR BONES LITTER THE DESERT SAND.

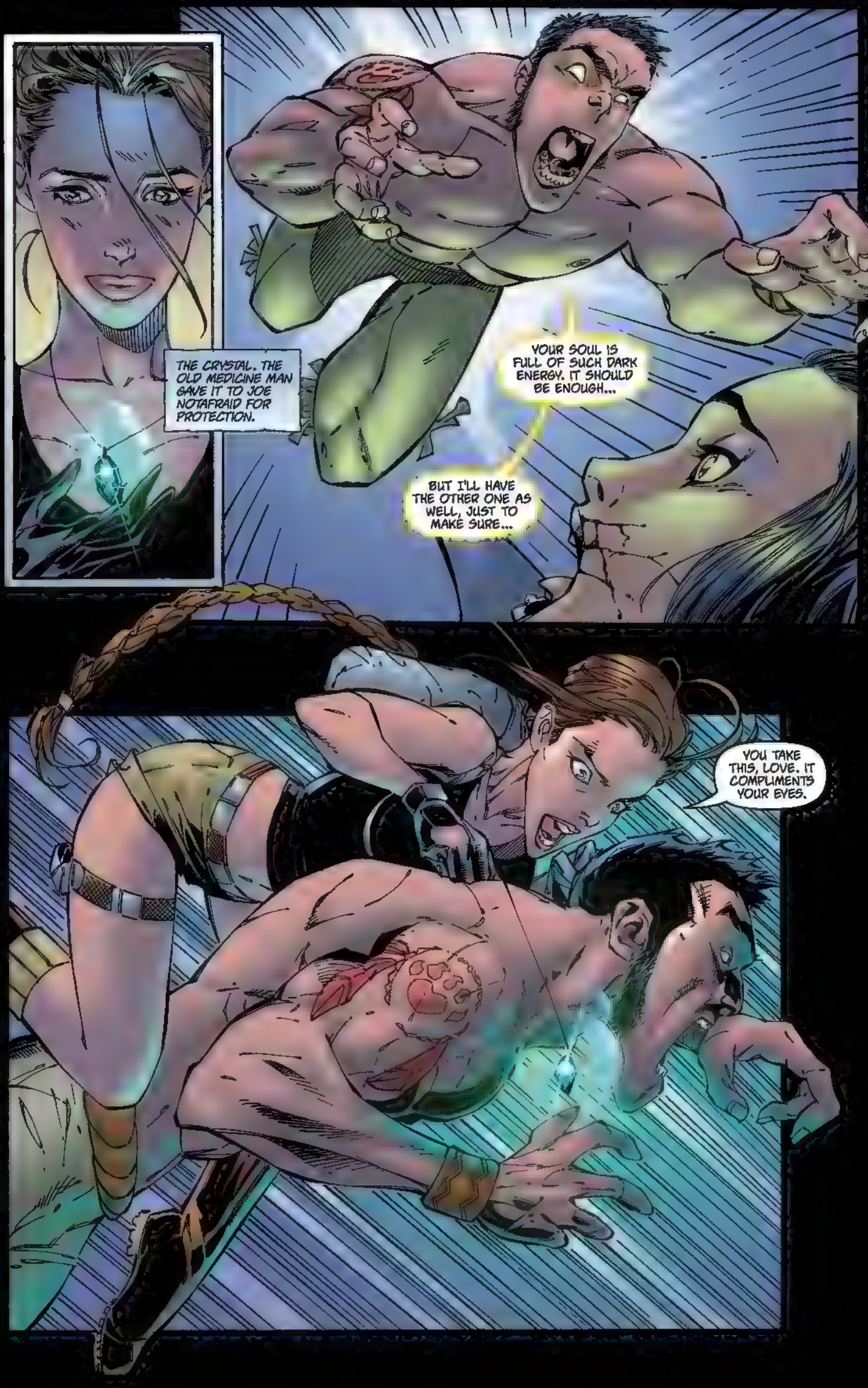
THE DUTCHMAN'S GOLD LIES SOMEWHERE WITHIN THE NEEDLE. AND HOPEFULLY I'LL FIND IT. ALONG WITH JOE NOTAFRAID.
I'M BACK, SWEET THING. DID'JA MISS ME?
ACTUALLY, I WAS QUITE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN.
WE CAN SHARE A BIT OF QUALITY TIME TOGETHER.

OH, LOOK. ANNIE'S STILL GOT HER GUN. THAT'S HARDLY WHAT I'D CALL A FAIR FIGHT.
FAIR ENOUGH.
TOO BAD FOR YOU I DON'T FIGHT FAIR!
WELL, NOW THAT WE'VE GOT THE RULES OUT OF THE WAY...
BLOMP!!

RIGHT, LET'S GET STARTED.
ANYTHING YOU SAY.
I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU, SUGARCANE, YOU CAN HOLD YOUR OWN.
I'M JUST WARMING UP, M'LADY.
WELL DON'T HOLD BACK ON MY...
ACCOUNT!

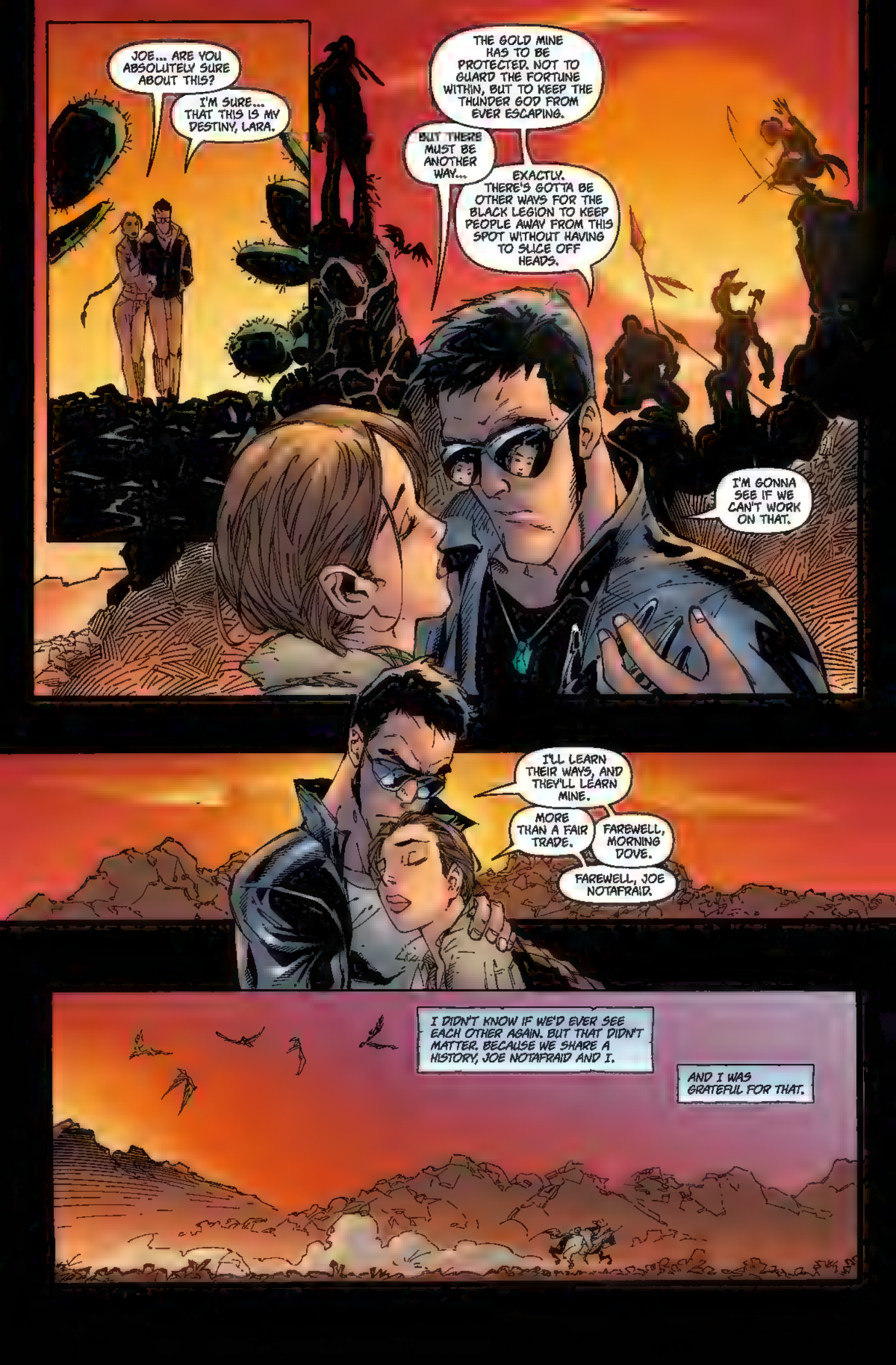
WHERE THE HELL...?
LOOKS LIKE WE HIT THE MOTHER LODE, GIRLFRIEND.
THE DUTCHMAN'S GOLD.
WHAT THE HELL...?
HUMAN BEINGS...
SWALLOWED UP BY THE GOLD.
THOSE WRETCHES WHO DARED TRESPASS ON MY EARTHY DOMAIN.
THEIR SOULS NOURISHED ME. KEPT ME FROM GROWING WEAK OVER MY LONG IMPRISONMENT. ALLOWED ME TO SURVIVE FOR THIS DAY...
THIS DAY OF FREEDOM!

WHAT'S NOTAFRAID BABBLING ABOUT?
THAT ISN'T JOE NOTAFRAID SPEAKING.
HE'S BEEN POSSESSED BY THE THUNDER GOD.
FOR EONS, I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THE RIGHT VESSEL. THE PERFECT COMBINATION OF SPIRITUAL STRENGTH AND A CORRUPTIBLE HEART.
WITH THIS VESSEL, I'LL BE ABLE TO LEAVE THIS CURSED PLACE AND VENTURE INTO THE WORLD OF MAN. AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF SOULS TO FEED UPON... AND GROW EVER STRONGER.
I REQUIRE A BIT MORE STRENGTH TO LEAVE THIS PLACE...
SUCH POWER. IT MUST BE EXHILARATING. INTOXICATING.
I CAN HELP YOU. BE YOUR LINK TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. IF I CAN JUST TASTE YOUR POWER...
OH, YOU SHALL HELP ME.
WHOMP!


THE CRYSTAL. THE OLD MEDICINE MAN GAVE IT TO JOE NOTAFRAID FOR PROTECTION.
YOUR SOUL IS FULL OF SUCH DARK ENERGY. IT SHOULD BE ENOUGH...
BUT I'LL HAVE THE OTHER ONE AS WELL, JUST TO MAKE SURE...
YOU TAKE THIS, LOVE. IT COMPLIMENTS YOUR EYES.

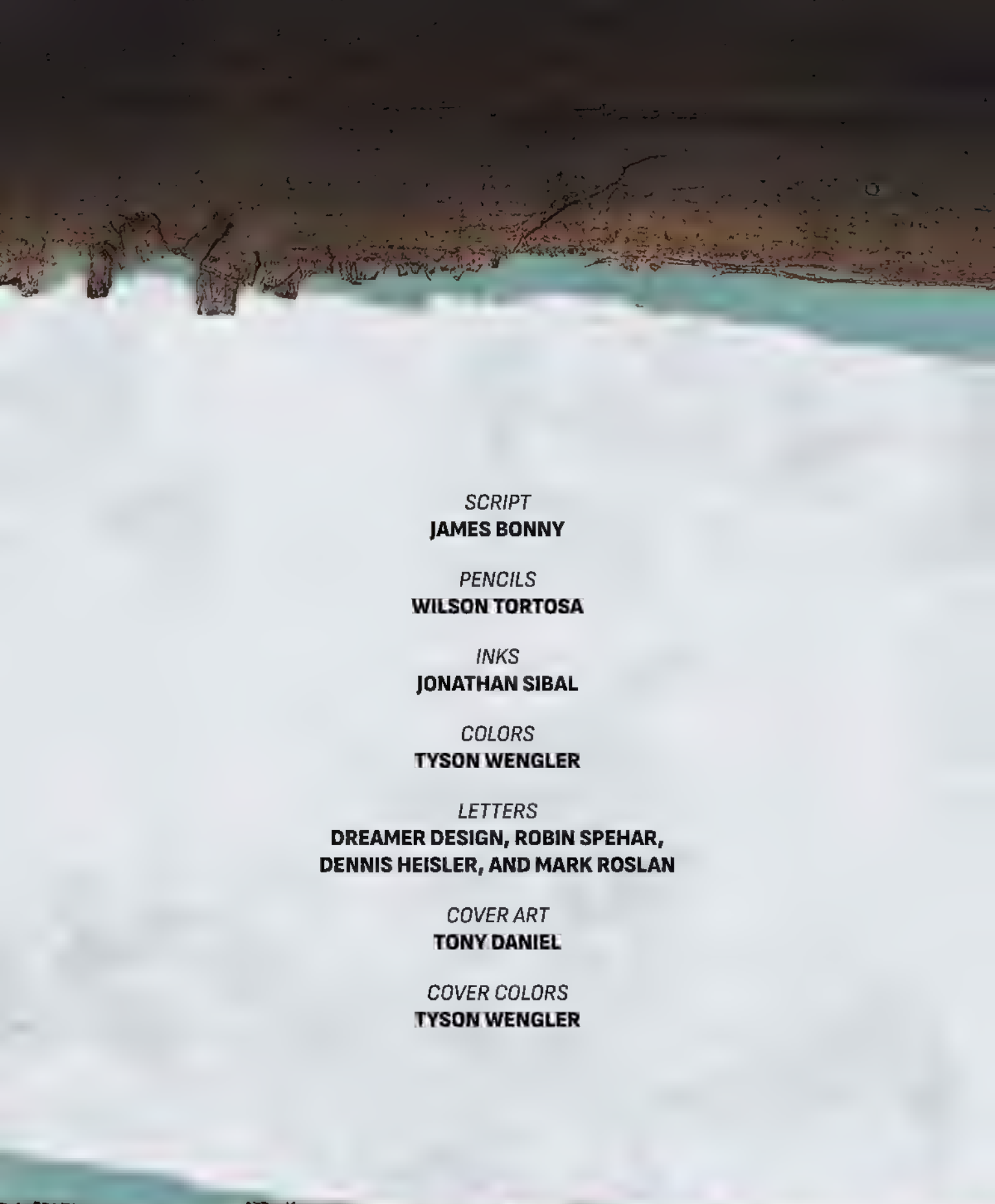
KWOO-VWASH!
NOOOOOOOOOO!

LARA...?
GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK, JOE.
RRMMBBLL!
HEY, WHAT ABOUT ME?
YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, LADY.
RRMMBBLL!
BRBRBRRBRR!
-BOOM


JOE... ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY SURE ABOUT THIS?
I'M SURE... THAT THIS IS MY DESTINY, LARA.
THE GOLD MINE HAS TO BE PROTECTED. NOT TO GUARD THE FORTUNE WITHIN, BUT TO KEEP THE THUNDER GOD FROM EVER ESCAPING.
BUT THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY...
EXACTLY. THERE'S GOTTA BE OTHER WAYS FOR THE BLACK LEGION TO KEEP PEOPLE AWAY FROM THIS SPOT WITHOUT HAVING TO SLICE OFF HEADS.
I'M GONNA SEE IF WE CAN'T WORK ON THAT.
I'LL LEARN THEIR WAYS, AND THEY'LL LEARN MINE.
MORE THAN A FAIR TRADE.
FAREWELL, MORNING DOVE.
FAREWELL, JOE NOTAFRAID.
I DIDN'T KNOW IF WE'D EVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN. BUT THAT DIDN'T MATTER. BECAUSE WE SHARE A HISTORY, JOE NOTAFRAID AND I.
AND I WAS GRATEFUL FOR THAT.

ADIOS, PRINCESS.
FOR NOW.
THE END.
NEXT ISSUE:
BLOODSTONES

TONY DANIEL '03
TW



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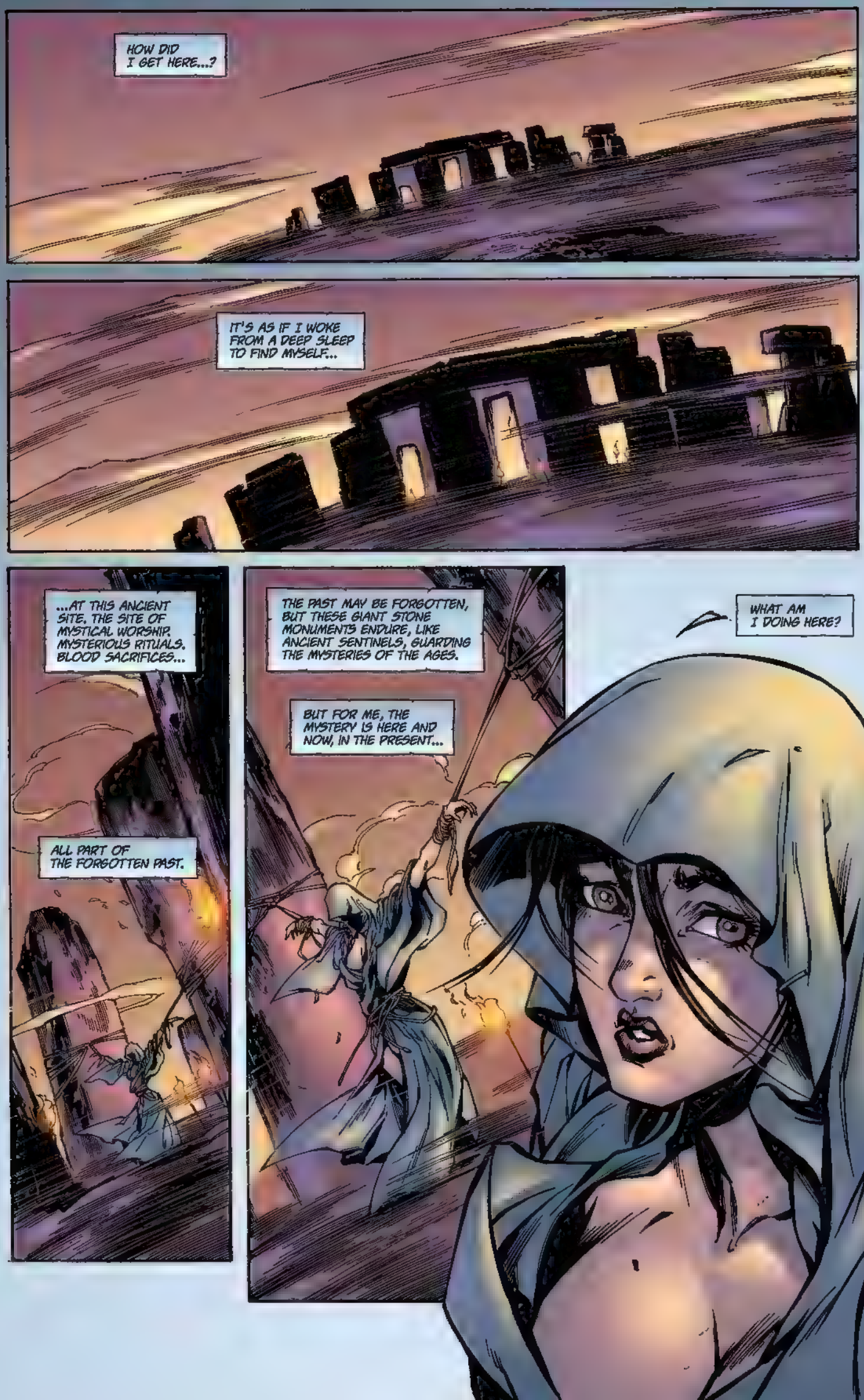
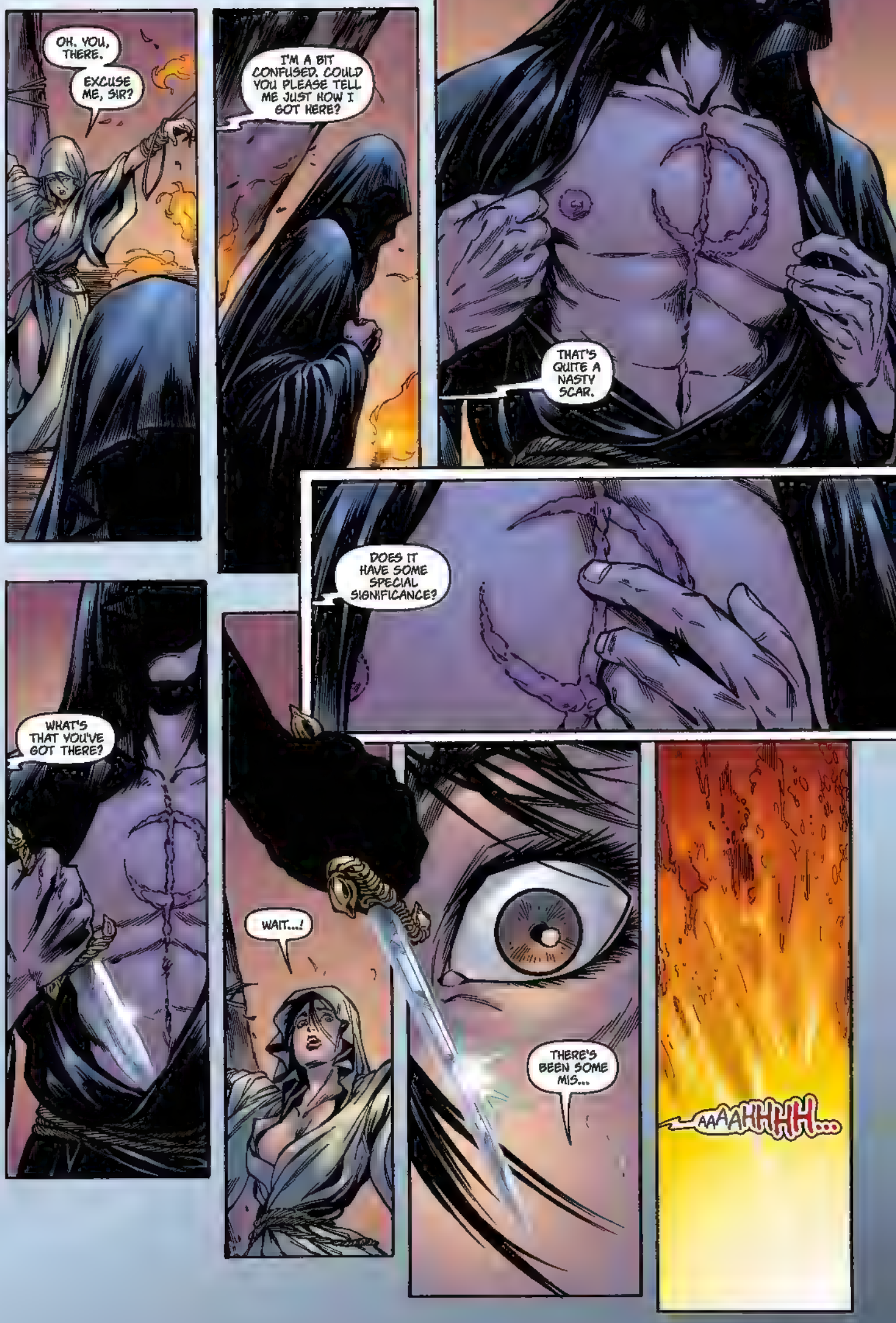
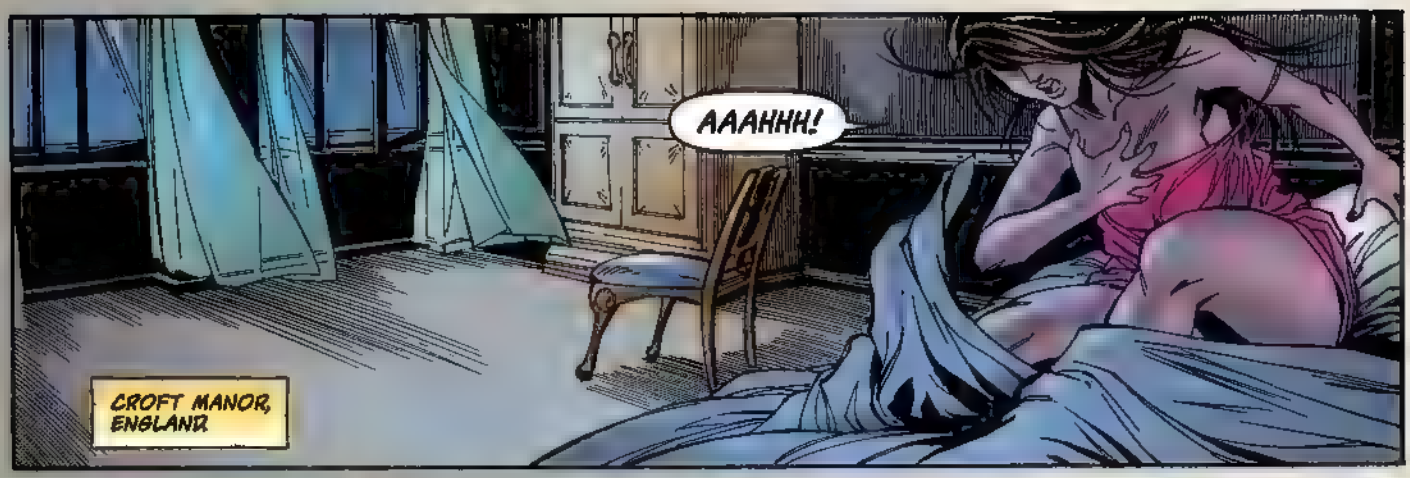
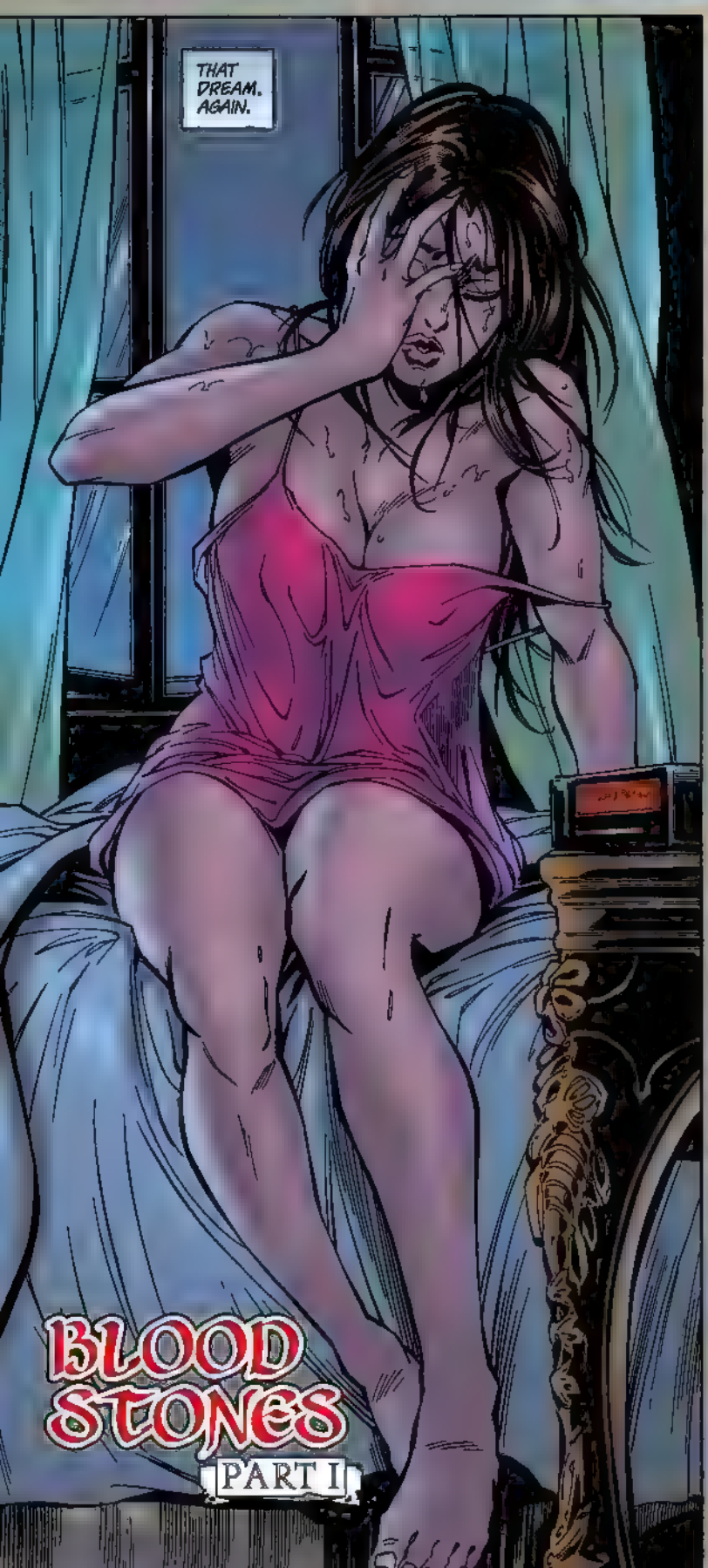
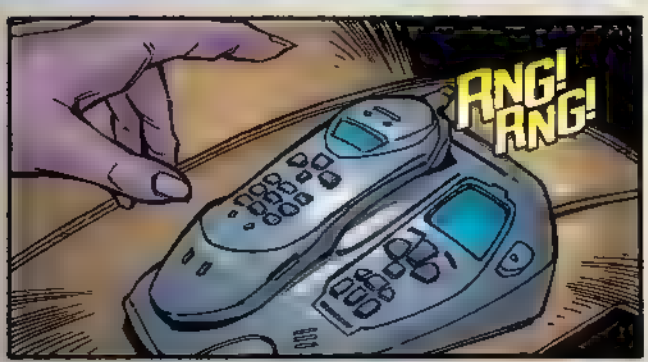
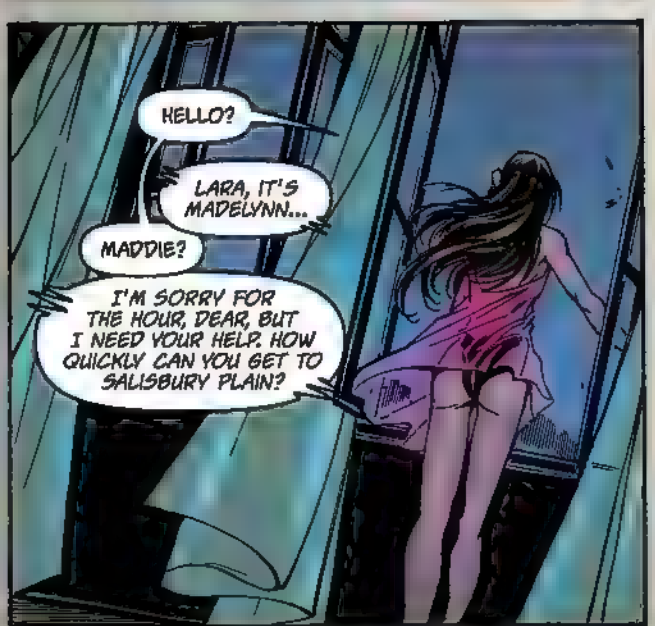

HOW DID I GET HERE...?
IT'S AS IF I WOKE FROM A DEEP SLEEP TO FIND MYSELF...
...AT THIS ANCIENT SITE, THE SITE OF MYSTICAL WORSHIP, MYSTERIOUS RITUALS, BLOOD SACRIFICES...
ALL PART OF THE FORGOTTEN PAST.
THE PAST MAY BE FORGOTTEN, BUT THESE GIANT STONE MONUMENTS ENDURE, LIKE ANCIENT SENTINELS, GUARDING THE MYSTERIES OF THE AGES.
BUT FOR ME, THE MYSTERY IS HERE AND NOW, IN THE PRESENT...
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?


OH, YOU, THERE.
EXCUSE ME, SIR?
I'M A BIT CONFUSED. COULD YOU PLEASE TELL ME JUST HOW I GOT HERE?
THAT'S QUITE A NASTY SCAR.
DOES IT HAVE SOME SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE?
WHAT'S THAT YOU'VE GOT THERE?
WAIT...!
THERE'S BEEN SOME MIS...
AAAAHHHH...


AAAHHH!
CROFT MANOR, ENGLAND

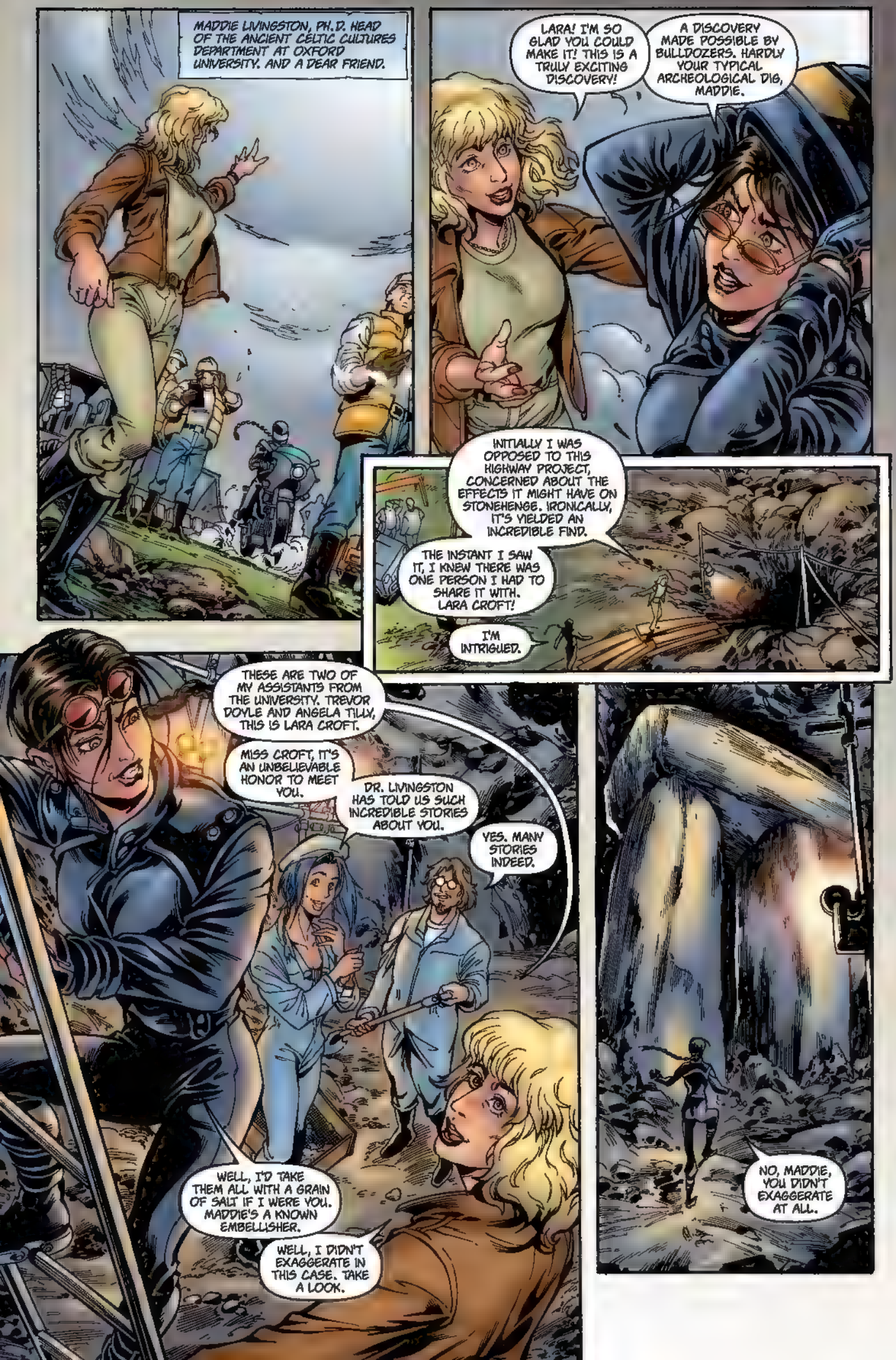

THAT DREAM. AGAIN.
BLOOD STONES
PART I


RNG! RNG!


HELLO?
LARA, IT'S MADELYNN...
MADDIE?
I'M SORRY FOR THE HOUR, DEAR, BUT I NEED YOUR HELP. HOW QUICKLY CAN YOU GET TO SALISBURY PLAIN?

STONEHENGE?

SOUTHERN ENGLAND
SALISBURY PLAIN. A LOVELY, OUT OF THE WAY PLACE, JUST A FEW MILES WEST OF AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE.
VROOOM!
MY FATHER FIRST BROUGHT ME TO STONEHENGE WHEN I WAS BARELY THREE. STANDING IN THE GREAT SARSEN CIRCLE, GAZING UP AT THE TOWERING MEGALITHS IS, IN FACT, ONE OF MY EARLIEST MEMORIES.
UNTIL RECENTLY, THE SIGHT OF STONEHENGE ALWAYS FILLED ME WITH WONDER...
BUT NOW... SINCE THE DREAMS... IT MAKES MY SKIN CRAWL.
THIS PLACE HAS DRAWN PEOPLE TO IT FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS...
STO THE HIGHWAY
ONEHENGE S SACRED
PRESERVE THE PLAIN
AND TODAY IS NO EXCEPTION.


MADDIE LIVINGSTON, PH.D. HEAD OF THE ANCIENT CELTIC CULTURES DEPARTMENT AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY. AND A DEAR FRIEND.
LARA! I'M SO GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT! THIS IS A TRULY EXCITING DISCOVERY!
A DISCOVERY MADE POSSIBLE BY BULLDOZERS. HARDLY YOUR TYPICAL ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG, MADDIE.
INITIALLY I WAS OPPOSED TO THIS HIGHWAY PROJECT, CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECTS IT MIGHT HAVE ON STONEHENGE. IRONICALLY, IT'S YIELDED AN INCREDIBLE FIND.
THE INSTANT I SAW IT, I KNEW THERE WAS ONE PERSON I HAD TO SHARE IT WITH. LARA CROFT!
I'M INTRIGUED.
THESE ARE TWO OF MY ASSISTANTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY. TREVOR DOYLE AND ANGELA TILLY, THIS IS LARA CROFT.
MISS CROFT, IT'S AN UNBELIEVABLE HONOR TO MEET YOU.
DR. LIVINGSTON HAS TOLD US SUCH INCREDIBLE STORIES ABOUT YOU.
YES. MANY STORIES INDEED.
WELL, I'D TAKE THEM ALL WITH A GRAIN OF SALT IF I WERE YOU. MADDIE'S A KNOWN EMBELLISHER.
WELL, I DIDN'T EXAGGERATE IN THIS CASE. TAKE A LOOK.
NO, MADDIE, YOU DIDN'T EXAGGERATE AT ALL.

DEFINITELY BLUESTONE. IGNEOUS ROCK. PROBABLY CARVED FROM AN OUTCROP IN THE PRESELI HILLS IN PEMBROKESHIRE, WALES.
JUST LIKE STONEHENGE.
THE CARVING IS UNUSUAL. I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT SYMBOL BEFORE IN CELTIC LORE.
REALLY? WHERE?
I'VE... SEEN IT BEFORE.
I'D... RATHER NOT SAY.
I SUPPOSE IT COULD INDICATE THE LOCATION OF SOME OTHER BURIED ARTIFACT...
RRMMBBBR!
RRRMMMBBBRRRRR!
GET BACK!

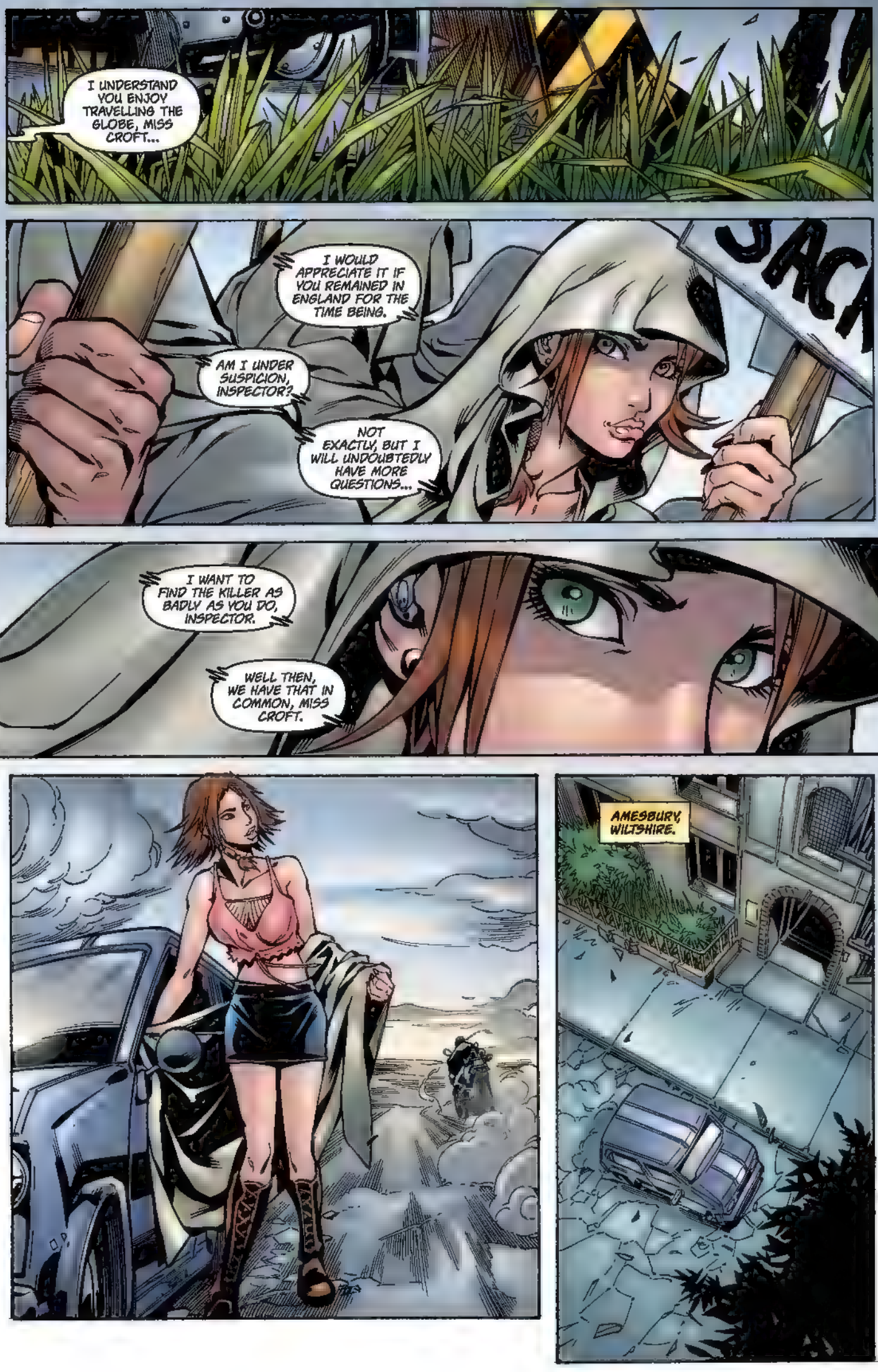
BRB-BOOW!
OH MY LORD! IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?
I'M ALL RIGHT, DR. LIVINGSTON, BUT WHAT HAPPENED?
THERE'S SOMETHING THERE...
WHAT'VE YOU FOUND, MISS CROFT?
A CRYSTAL DAGGER...
LARA...!

BWONG!
PHUMPH!
THE SYMBOL...
THE CRYSTAL DAGGER...
PART OF A DREAM?

OR REALITY?
THE CRYSTAL DAGGER. GONE.
MADDIE AND TREVOR. GONE.
BUT ANGELA...?
OH. ANGELA...

THE DREAM...
IT'S BECOMING REALITY.

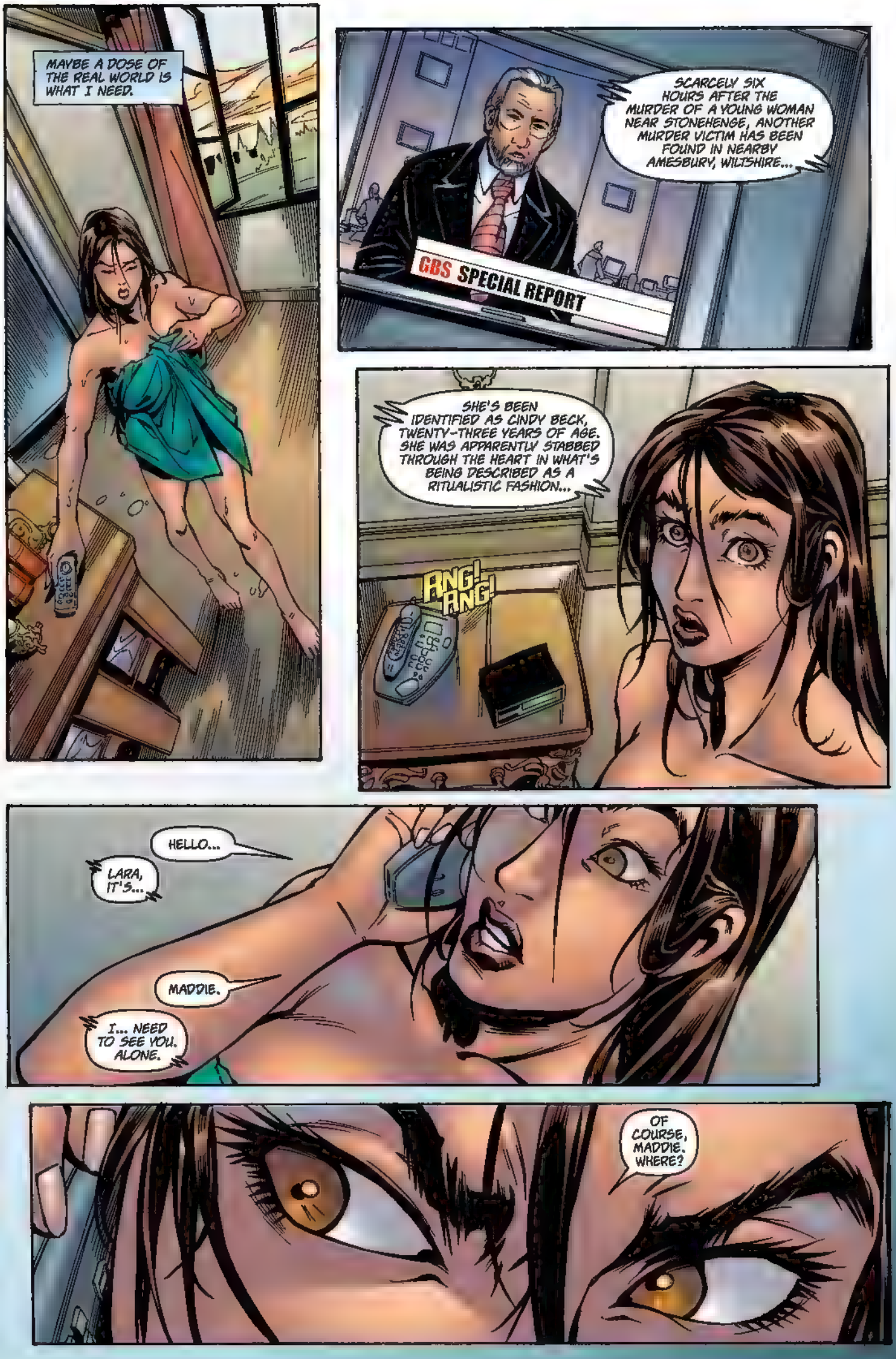
SO THAT'S YOUR STORY THEN, IS IT, MISS CROFT?
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED, INSPECTOR CASTLEBERRY.
IT SEEMS A BIT... IMPLAUSIBLE. IN SPOTS.
IMPLAUSIBLE TO YOU, MAYBE. BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T DOWN THERE.
YES, IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING TO BEHOLD. A GIANT STONE BLOCK SPLITTING ASUNDER, REVEALING A CRYSTAL DAGGER. TRULY EXTRAORDINARY.
BUT YOU DIDN'T SEE WHO STRUCK YOU FROM BEHIND? AND YOU DIDN'T SEE WHO SLAUGHTERED THAT POOR GIRL?
NO, INSPECTOR. I DIDN'T.
THAT'S A PITY.
WHAT ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS? SURELY THEY MUST HAVE SEEN SOMETHING.
THEY ALL NOTICED YOUR ARRIVAL, TO BE SURE. BUT NONE OF THEM SAW ANYONE LEAVE THE DIG. NOT DR. LIVINGSTON, AND NOT MR. TREVOR DOYLE.
I FIND THAT IMPLAUSIBLE, INSPECTOR.
AS DO I, MISS CROFT. AS DO I.


I UNDERSTAND YOU ENJOY TRAVELLING THE GLOBE, MISS CROFT...
I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU REMAINED IN ENGLAND FOR THE TIME BEING.
AM I UNDER SUSPICION, INSPECTOR?
NOT EXACTLY, BUT I WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE MORE QUESTIONS...
I WANT TO FIND THE KILLER AS BADLY AS YOU DO, INSPECTOR.
WELL THEN, WE HAVE THAT IN COMMON, MISS CROFT.
AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE.

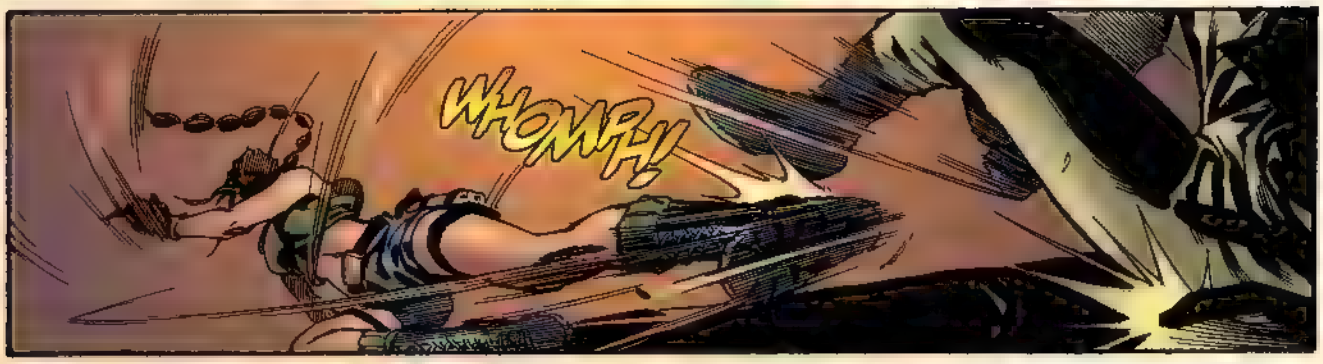
HELLO, CINDY.
TREVOR! YOU SCARED THE WITS OUT OF ME!
SORRY. I WAS JUST SO ANXIOUS TO HEAR FROM YOU.
AND TO KNOW WHAT YOU HEARD.
NO WORRIES. THEY TALKED ABOUT YOU A BIT. BUT NOBODY SAW A THING. THE COPS ARE PUTTING THE SQUEEZE ON THAT RICH PRINCESS.
SO NO ONE SAW ME LEAVE?
WENT OFF JUST LIKE YOU SAID IT WOULD, LOVE.
STILL... THE LAW'S LIABLE TO COME LOOKING FOR YOU.
OF COURSE THEY WILL.
AND I INTEND TO LEAVE A TRAIL FOR THEM TO FOLLOW.
A TRAIL? WHA' YOU MEAN? LIKE BREADCRUMBS?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

TREVOR...!
NO...!
BUT... YOU SAID I'M TO BE PART OF IT!
YOU ARE, DEAR.
TWO DOWN...
THREE TO GO.

I HAD HOPED THE DRIVE HOME WOULD HELP CLEAR MY HEAD.
BUT THINGS SEEMS MORE CONFUSING, MORE SURREAL, THAN EVER.
DREAMS ARE SUPPOSED TO FADE IN THE WAKING HOURS, RETREATING INTO THE FOG OF OUR SUBCONSCIOUS.
BUT MY DREAM IS BECOMING MORE VIVID IN MY MIND THAN EVER. AS IF IT WERE CATCHING UP WITH ME.
AND REALITY IS STARTING TO FEEL LIKE A DREAM.
OR RATHER, A NIGHTMARE.
WHEN WILL I WAKE FROM THIS?
WILL IT TAKE THE STING OF THE CRYSTAL DAGGER?


MAYBE A DOSE OF THE REAL WORLD IS WHAT I NEED.
SCARCELY SIX HOURS AFTER THE MURDER OF A YOUNG WOMAN NEAR STONEHENGE, ANOTHER MURDER VICTIM HAS BEEN FOUND IN NEARBY AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE...
GBS SPECIAL REPORT
SHE'S BEEN IDENTIFIED AS CINDY BECK, TWENTY-THREE YEARS OF AGE. SHE WAS APPARENTLY STABBED THROUGH THE HEART IN WHAT'S BEING DESCRIBED AS A RITUALISTIC FASHION...
RING! RING!
HELLO...
LARA, IT'S...
MADDIE.
I... NEED TO SEE YOU. ALONE.
OF COURSE, MADDIE. WHERE?

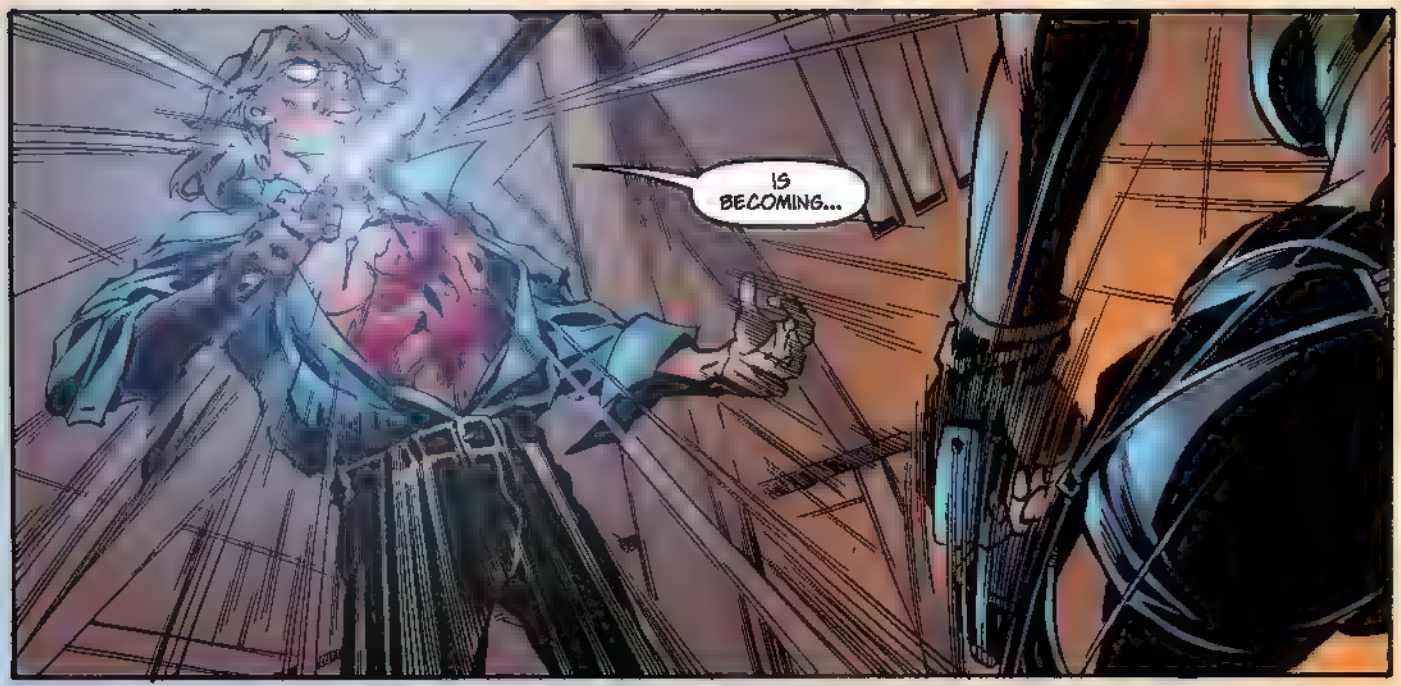
OLD FRIEND OR NOT, THIS TIME I WAS GOING IN WITH MY GUARD UP.
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, INSPECTOR CASTLEBERRY, BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW I'M ABOUT TO MEET WITH AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE...
MADDIE?


WHOMP!

LARA!
I'M HERE, MADDIE. ALONE. NOW START TALKING.
I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS GOING TO KILL ANYONE! I SWEAR TO YOU!
TREVOR DOYLE?
YES, TREVOR DOYLE. THE BEST STUDENT I EVER HAD.

IT WAS TREVOR WHO FIRST LEARNED OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE CRYSTAL DAGGER. LONG BEFORE THE STONE BLOCKS WERE UNEARTHED.
HE KNEW THE BLOCKS HAD BEEN BURIED SOMEWHERE NEAR STONEHENGE, BUT THEIR EXACT LOCATION WAS A MYSTERY.
UNTIL THE BULLDOZERS.

TREVOR KNEW YOU WERE THE ONE TO OPEN THE BLOCK. HE CLAIMED HE SAW IT IN A VISION. HE SAW YOU DISCOVER THE CRYSTAL DAGGER, AND THEN HE SAW YOU SACRIFICED AT STONEHENGE.
THE DREAM...

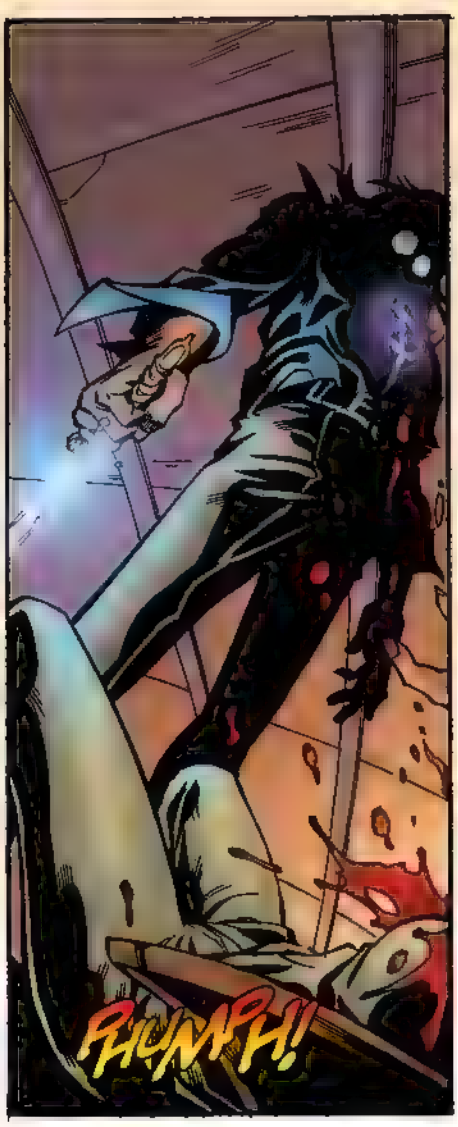

IS BECOMING...

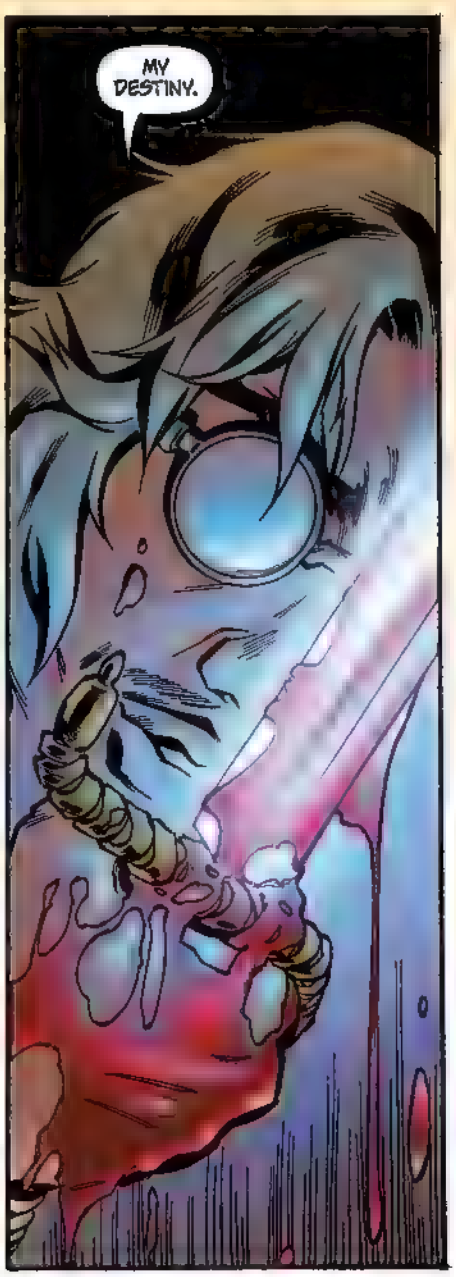
REALITY!
BA-VASSSH!

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN, TEACHER.

I TRUSTED YOUR CONFIDENCE...
TREVOR...! NO!

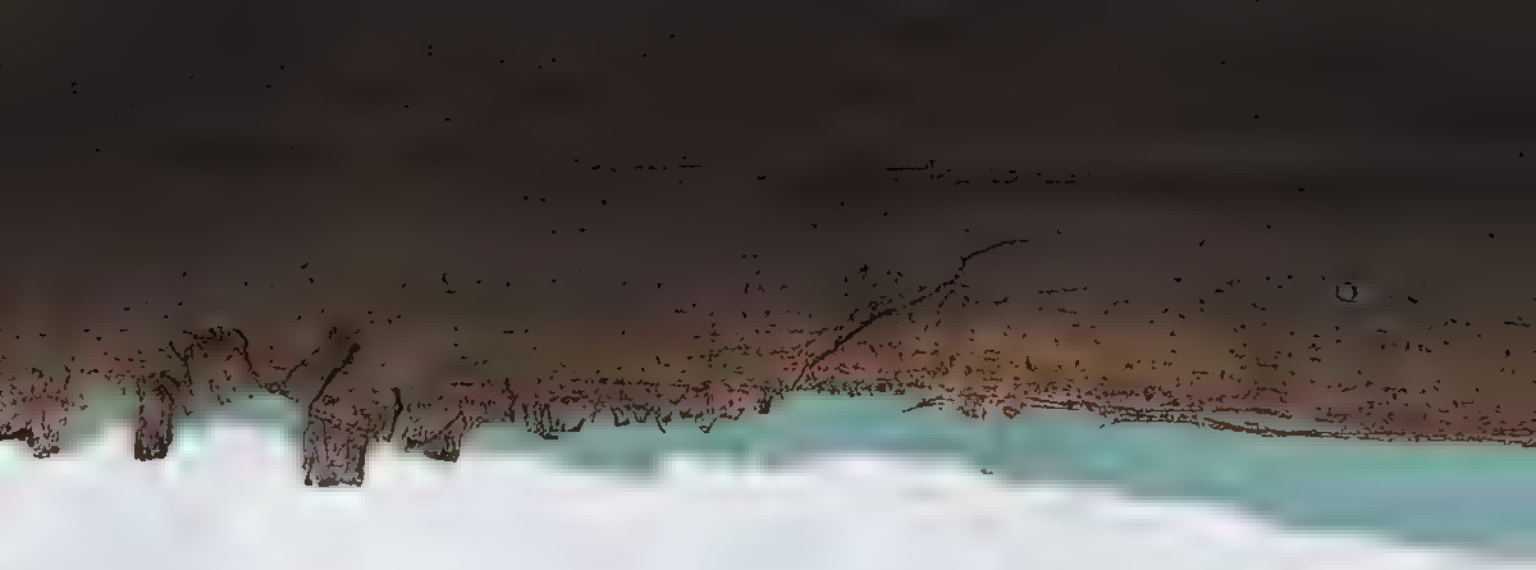
AND YOU BETRAYED ME!


PHUMPH!


MY DESTINY.

IT'S TOO SOON FOR YOU.
BUT YOUR TIME WILL COME.
BAA-VOOSH!
KAA-BAASH!
VANISHED INTO THIN AIR. JUST LIKE AT THE DIG.

COULD THIS BE A DREAM...?
OR HAS THE DREAM BECOME REALITY.
IT'S BECOMING DIFFICULT TO TELL THE TWO APART.
TO BE CONTINUED...



SCRIPT
JAMES BONNY

PENCILS
WILSON TORTOSA

INKS
JONATHAN SIBAL

COLORS
TYSON WENGLER

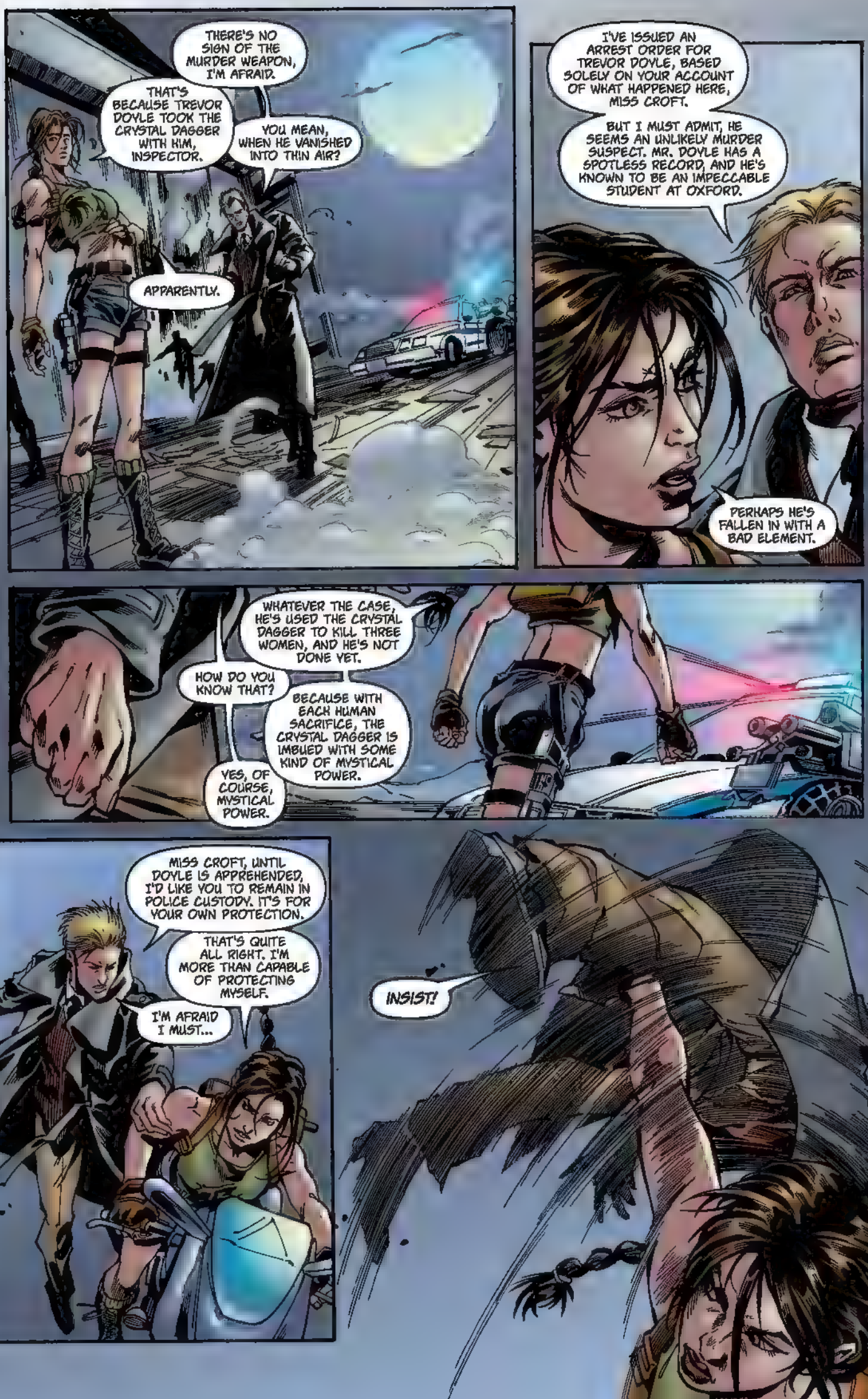
LETTERS
DREAMER DESIGN, ROBIN SPEHAR,
DENNIS HEISLER, AND MARK ROSLAN

COVER PENCILS
WILSON TORTOSA

COVER INKS
JONATHAN SIBAL

COVER COLORS
TYSON WENGLER

SOUTHERN ENGLAND
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DREAMS AND REALITY CAN SOMETIMES BECOME BLURRED.
UNTIL YOU FIND YOURSELF STARING AT THE HARSH GLARE OF REALITY... IN THE FORM OF A FRIEND'S DEAD BODY.
BUT IT ALL BEGAN WITH A DREAM...
THE SAME DREAM, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT. I WAS SACRIFICED AMONG THE MEGALITHS OF STONEHENGE. STABBED THROUGH THE HEART BY A CRYSTAL DAGGER, WIELDED BY A FACELESS DRUID, BEARING A STRANGE SYMBOL CARVED INTO HIS CHEST.
THE SAME SYMBOL WHICH I FOUND ETCHED INTO ONE OF THE MASSIVE BLOCKS UNEARTHED AT SALISBURY PLAIN, NEAR STONEHENGE.
AND WHEN I TOUCHED THE SYMBOL, THE STONE BLOCK SHATTERED, REVEALING A CRYSTAL DAGGER. THE SAME CRYSTAL DAGGER FROM MY DREAM.
AND THE SAME CRYSTAL DAGGER TREVOR DOYLE LATER USED TO STAB MY FRIEND THROUGH THE HEART.
GOODBYE, MADDIE.


THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE MURDER WEAPON, I'M AFRAID.
THAT'S BECAUSE TREVOR DOYLE TOOK THE CRYSTAL DAGGER WITH HIM, INSPECTOR.
YOU MEAN, WHEN HE VANISHED INTO THIN AIR?
APPARENTLY.
I'VE ISSUED AN ARREST ORDER FOR TREVOR DOYLE, BASED SOLELY ON YOUR ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED HERE, MISS CROFT.
BUT I MUST ADMIT, HE SEEMS AN UNLIKELY MURDER SUSPECT. MR. DOYLE HAS A SPOTLESS RECORD, AND HE'S KNOWN TO BE AN IMPECCABLE STUDENT AT OXFORD.
PERHAPS HE'S FALLEN IN WITH A BAD ELEMENT.
WHATEVER THE CASE, HE'S USED THE CRYSTAL DAGGER TO KILL THREE WOMEN, AND HE'S NOT DONE YET.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
BECAUSE WITH EACH HUMAN SACRIFICE, THE CRYSTAL DAGGER IS IMBUED WITH SOME KIND OF MYSTICAL POWER.
YES, OF COURSE, MYSTICAL POWER.
MISS CROFT, UNTIL DOYLE IS APPREHENDED, I'D LIKE YOU TO REMAIN IN POLICE CUSTODY. IT'S FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION.
THAT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT. I'M MORE THAN CAPABLE OF PROTECTING MYSELF.
I'M AFRAID I MUST...
INSIST!

SORRY I CAN'T ACCOMMODATE YOU, INSPECTOR CASTLEBERRY...
...BUT I'M OFF TO FIND TREVOR DOYLE.
TA.
VRROOMM!
WOOMPH!
BLOOD STONES
PART II

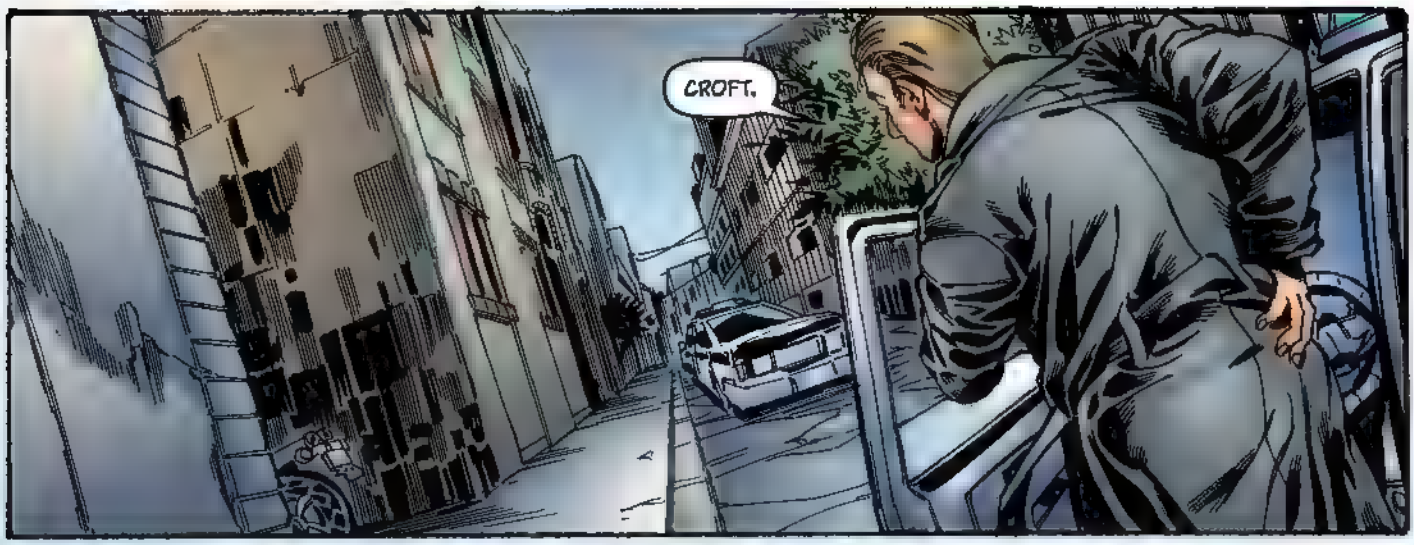
I HAD TO AGREE WITH INSPECTOR CASTLEBERRY ABOUT ONE THING. AT FIRST GLANCE, TREVOR DOYLE SEEMS AN UNLIKELY KILLER.
THE YOUNG MAN MADDIE LIVINGSTON BROUGHT ALONG FROM THE UNIVERSITY TO ASSIST HER WITH THE SUBTERRANEAN DIG SEEMED COMPLETELY HARMLESS.
BUT WITH THE CRYSTAL DAGGER IN HIS HANDS, TREVOR DOYLE CHANGED.
MADDIE TOLD ME TREVOR CLAIMED HE SAW IT ALL IN A VISION. THE DISCOVERY OF THE CRYSTAL DAGGER, AND ULTIMATELY, MY OWN BLOOD SACRIFICE AT STONEHENGE.
THAT WAS MOMENTS BEFORE HE STABBED HER THROUGH THE HEART WITH THE CRYSTAL DAGGER, GAINING EVEN MORE POWER.
TREVOR DOYLE MUST BE STOPPED...
BEFORE HE BECOMES UNSTOPPABLE.

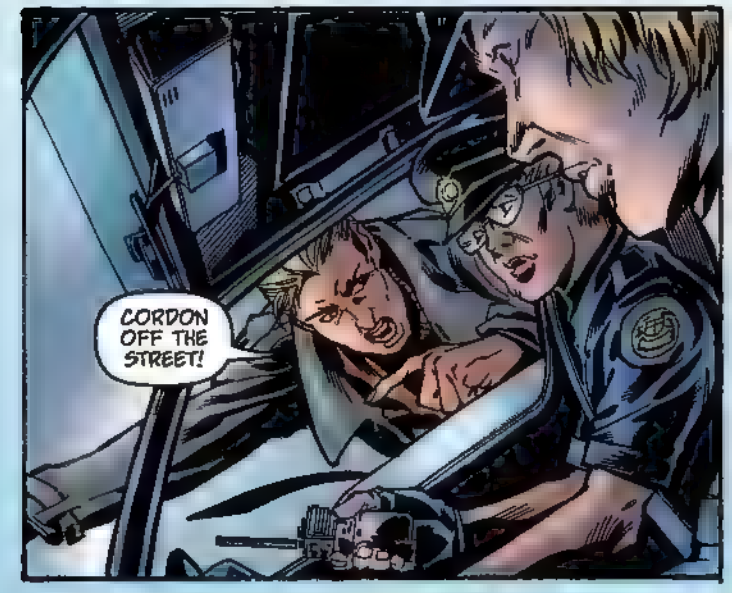
SALISBURY PLAIN, SOUTHERN ENGLAND.
ONE MORE DAY.
ONE MORE DAWN.
AND THEN THE ANCIENT POWER WILL BE FULLY REALIZED.
THE POWER THAT CARVED THOSE MASSIVE STONES FROM OUT OF THE EARTH, AND CARRIED THEM LIKE SO MANY FEATHERS IN THE WIND TO THIS SACRED SITE.
THE VISION IS BECOMING REALITY.
JUST TWO MORE SACRIFICES TO GO.

YOU NEVER TOLD US THAT CINDY WAS GOING TO BE ONE OF THE SACRIFICES, TREVOR! SHE WAS ONE OF US!
SHE FULFILLED HER DESTINY, CARTER.
HOW DO WE KNOW YOU WON'T DO THE SAME THING TO US?
BAA-VOOSH!
AAAEEEE!
YOU DON'T.
THIS ONE'S A STRANGER. DOES THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY, CARTER?
DRIVE.

WITH MY TRAVELLING LAPTOP, I WAS ABLE TO ACCESS OXFORD UNIVERSITY'S ENROLLMENT RECORDS AND CAME UP WITH TREVOR DOYLE'S LAST KNOWN ADDRESS.
THOUGH I DIDN'T EXPECT TO FIND HIM THERE, IT MIGHT PROVE WORTHWHILE TO TAKE A LOOK.
LOOKS LIKE THE AUTHORITIES HAD THE SAME IDEA.
POLICE
SKREEE!
I'M SURE THE WAY I LEFT THINGS WITH INSPECTOR CASTLEBERRY HAD EARNED ME AN ARREST ORDER.
BEST FLY UNDER THE RADAR.
BESIDES, I'M QUITE USED TO GAINING ENTRY THE HARD WAY.

THE SYMBOL FROM MY DREAM. COULD HE HAVE REALLY SEEN THE SAME THING IN HIS VISION?
IT SEEMS INTEREST IN DRUID LORE RAN IN THE DOYLE FAMILY.
JUNE 21ST. THAT'S TOMORROW. THE SUMMER SOLSTICE.
THAT'S WHERE I'LL FIND TREVOR DOYLE. DAWN TOMORROW. AT STONEHENGE.


CROFT.

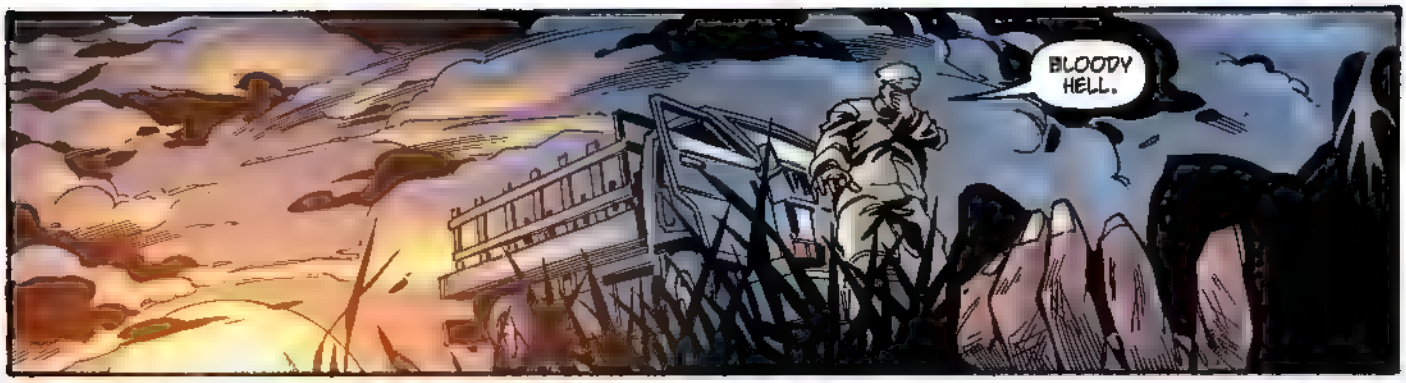

CORDON OFF THE STREET!

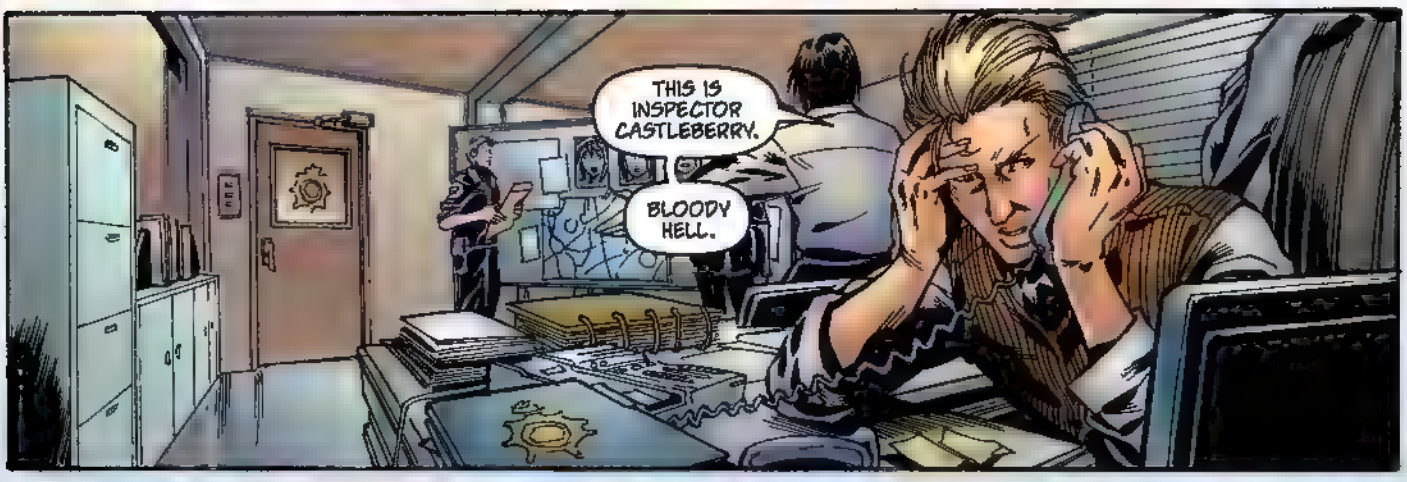
A SMART GUEST KNOWS NOT TO OVERSTAY THEIR WELCOME.

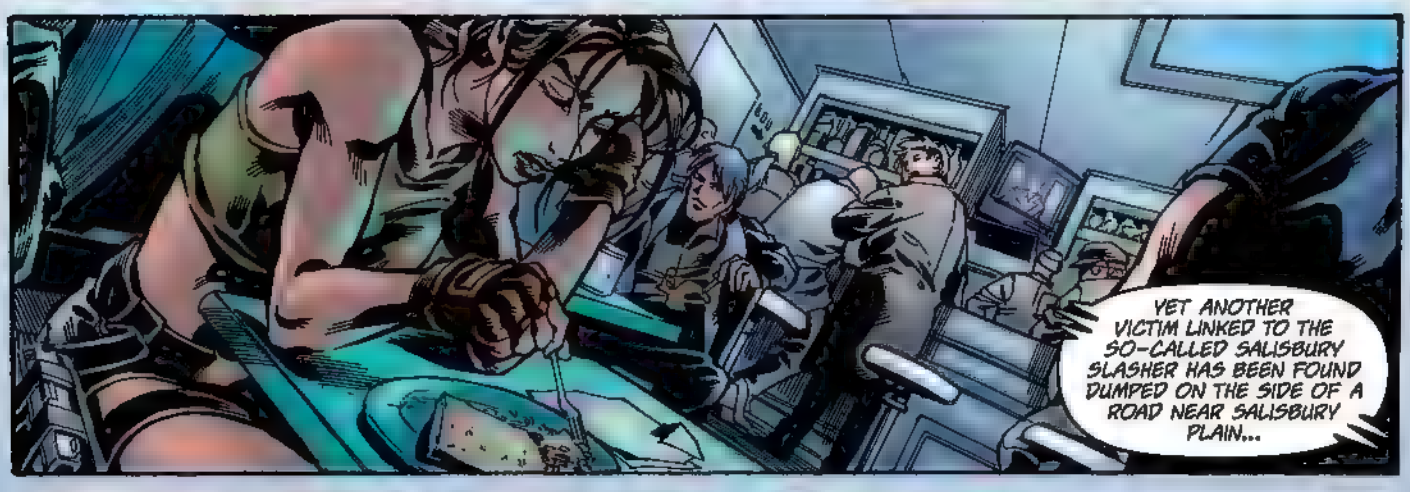
TIMING IS EVERYTHING.

SMAASH!

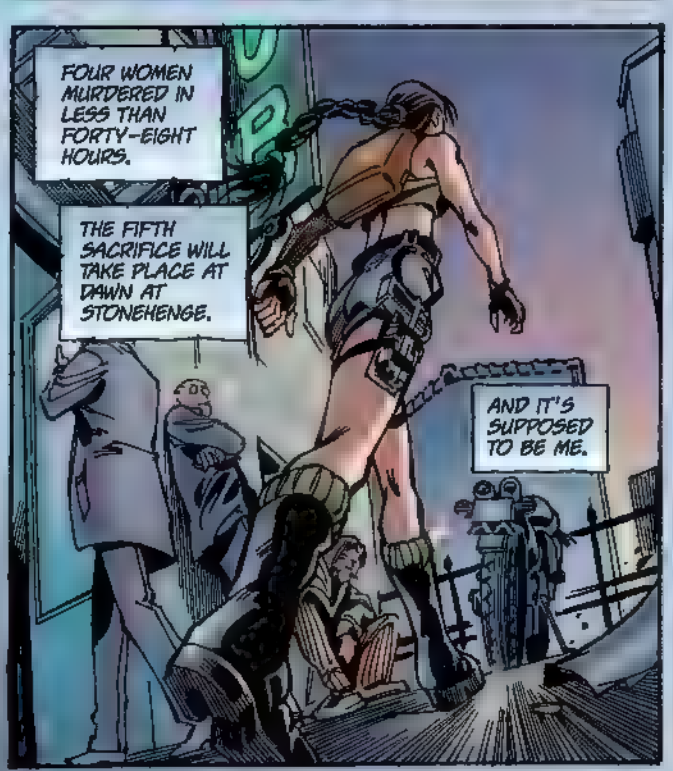
PHUMPH!
VVRROOOM!
VVRROOOM!
RROOAAAAR!
VRROAR!
VVRROOOM!

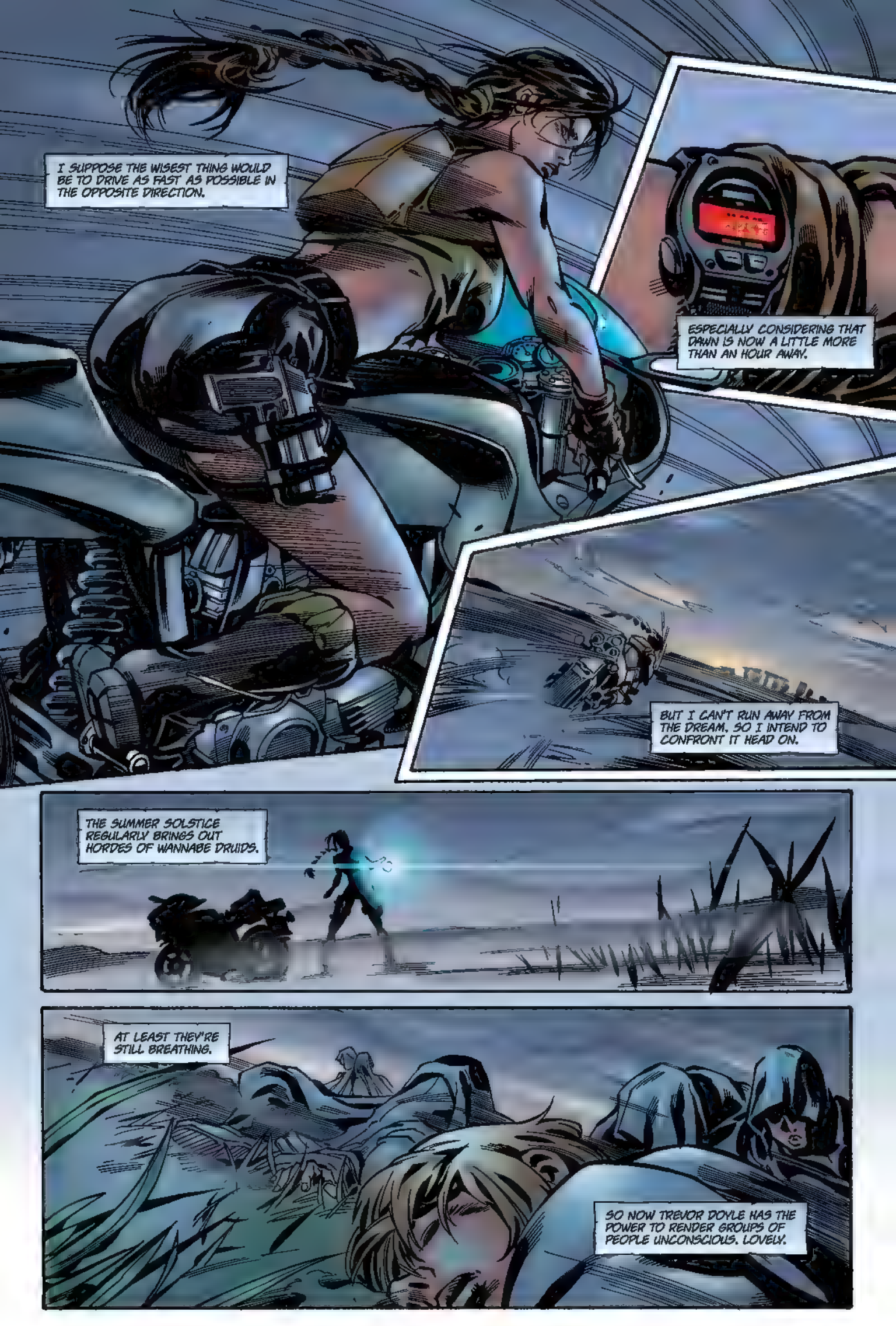

BLOODY HELL.


THIS IS INSPECTOR CASTLEBERRY.
BLOODY HELL.


YET ANOTHER VICTIM LINKED TO THE SO-CALLED SALISBURY SLASHER HAS BEEN FOUND DUMPED ON THE SIDE OF A ROAD NEAR SALISBURY PLAIN...

THIS BRINGS THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS TO FOUR...
BLOODY HELL.


FOUR WOMEN MURDERED IN LESS THAN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.
THE FIFTH SACRIFICE WILL TAKE PLACE AT DAWN AT STONEHENGE.
AND IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE ME.


I SUPPOSE THE WISEST THING WOULD BE TO DRIVE AS FAST AS POSSIBLE IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.
ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THAT DAWN IS NOW A LITTLE MORE THAN AN HOUR AWAY.
BUT I CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM THE DREAM. SO I INTEND TO CONFRONT IT HEAD ON.
THE SUMMER SOLSTICE REGULARLY BRINGS OUT HORDES OF WANNABE DRUIDS.
AT LEAST THEY'RE STILL BREATHING.
SO NOW TREVOR DOYLE HAS THE POWER TO RENDER GROUPS OF PEOPLE UNCONSCIOUS. LOVELY.

THERE WAS NO FENCE SURROUNDING STONEHENGE WHEN I CAME HERE AS A CHILD WITH MY FATHER.
IT WAS ERECTED TO KEEP OUT VANDALS.
AND TRESPASSERS.
NOT TO MENTION LUNATICS.

BWOOF!
NOT EXACTLY THE WAY IT HAPPENED IN MY DREAM.
BUT I'M FLEXIBLE.
ALL RIGHT, BOYS. WHERE'S TREVOR DOYLE?
RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
BAA-VOOSH!
PHUMPH!

HOW... DID I GET HERE?
YOUR DESTINY BROUGHT YOU HERE, LARA CROFT. JUST AS MINE DID.
THESE LIVING ROCKS WERE DRAWN TO YOUR ENERGY. THEY ABSORBED BUT A PARTICLE OF IT WHEN YOU CAME HERE AS A CHILD.
ENOUGH TO REMEMBER YOU.
THIS THEY WHISPERED TO ME.
I COME FROM A LONG LINE OF DRUIDS. SACRED RITUALS WERE PASSED ON TO ME.
MY GRANDFATHER FORETOLD THAT I WOULD BE THE ONE TO UNLOCK THE POWER OF STONEHENGE. THAT I WOULD HARNESS THE POWER.
THAT I WOULD BECOME THE POWER!
AND THAT TIME HAS FINALLY COME.
TIME TO FULFILL THE DESTINY, LARA CROFT.

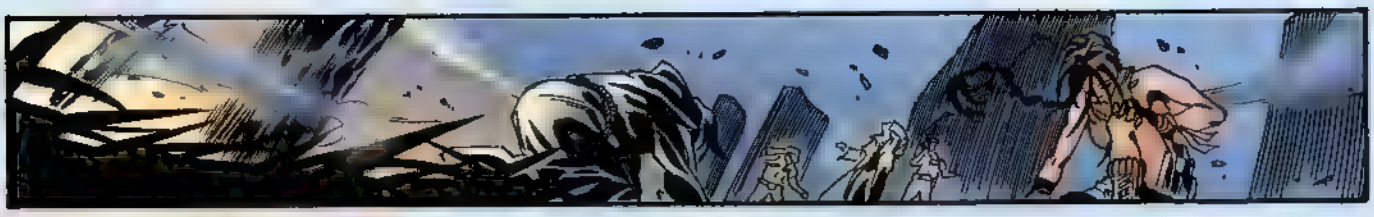
FHUMPH!
BWOP!
IT'S NOT MY DESTINY!
PHFFD!
BOOPF!

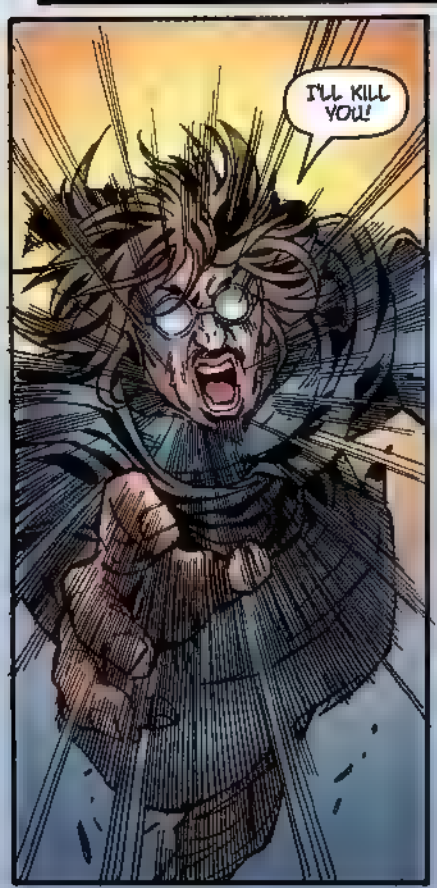
SORRY, PAMELA. BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IN A PINCH.
TREVOR... NO! PLEASE!
NO!
FFNKSH!
IT'S JUST LIKE MY DREAM.
BUT SHE TOOK MY PLACE.
HURRY!

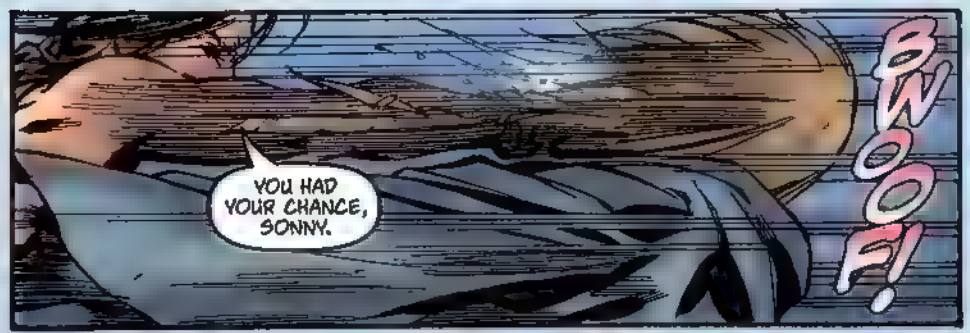
I AM THE POWER!
TREVOR DOYLE! SCOTLAND YARD! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
YOUR LAWS MEAN NOTHING TO ME!
VAA-VOOSH!
KK-CHOW!
NATURAL LAW MEANS NOTHING TO ME!
BWWWUMMMM!

VUUUUUMMMMMVVV!
I'LL RESHAPE THE WORLD! LIKE A GOD!

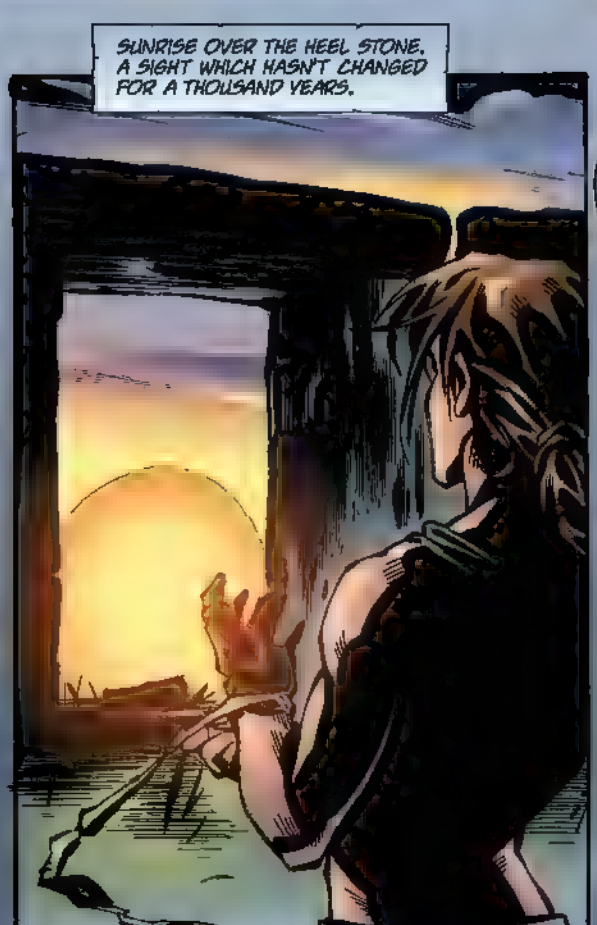
A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IS A DANGEROUS THING...
WHOOMPH!!
IN THE WRONG HANDS.
NO!!
WAAVAAASSH!



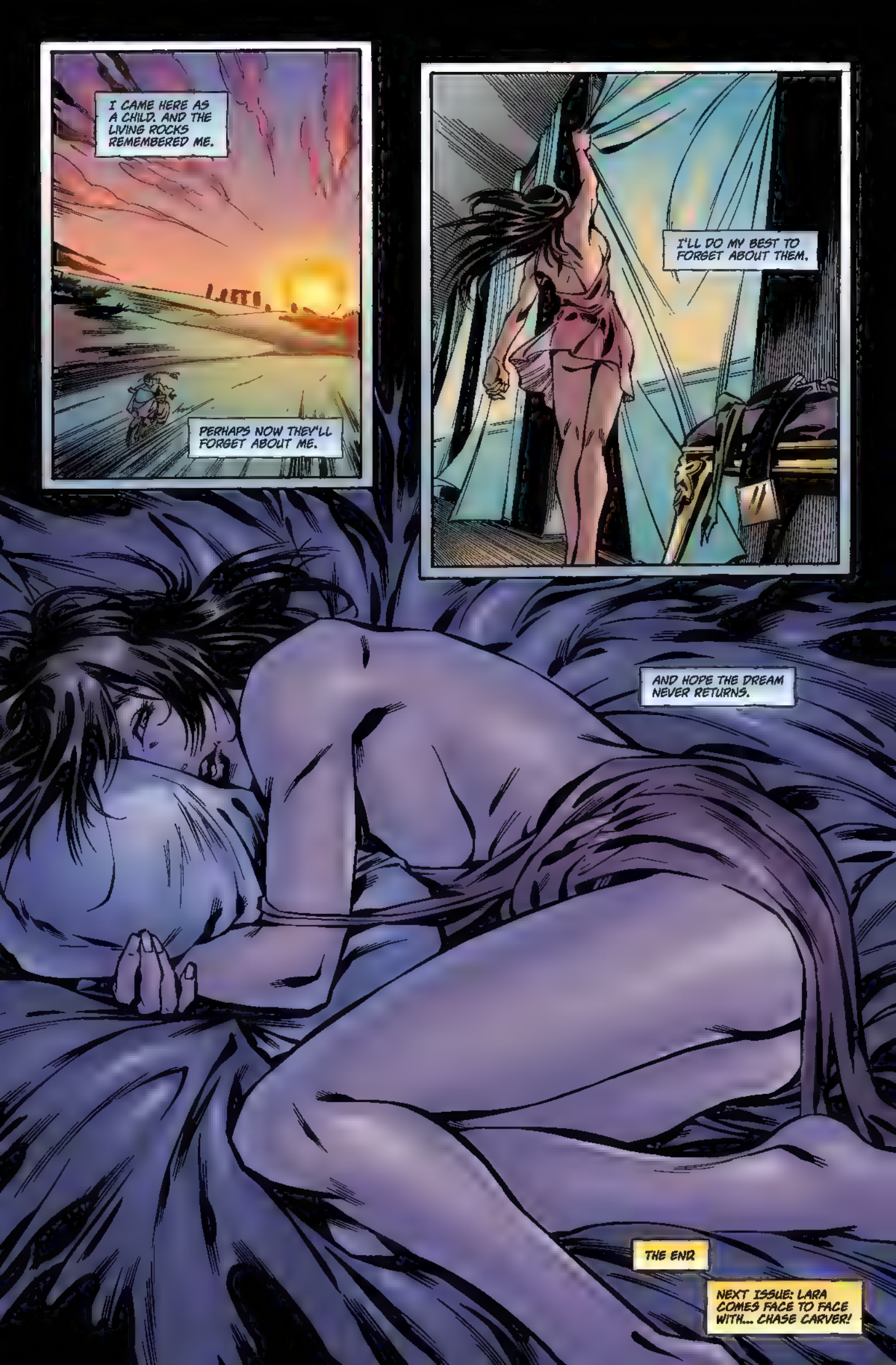

I'LL KILL YOU!


YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE, SONNY.
BWOF!

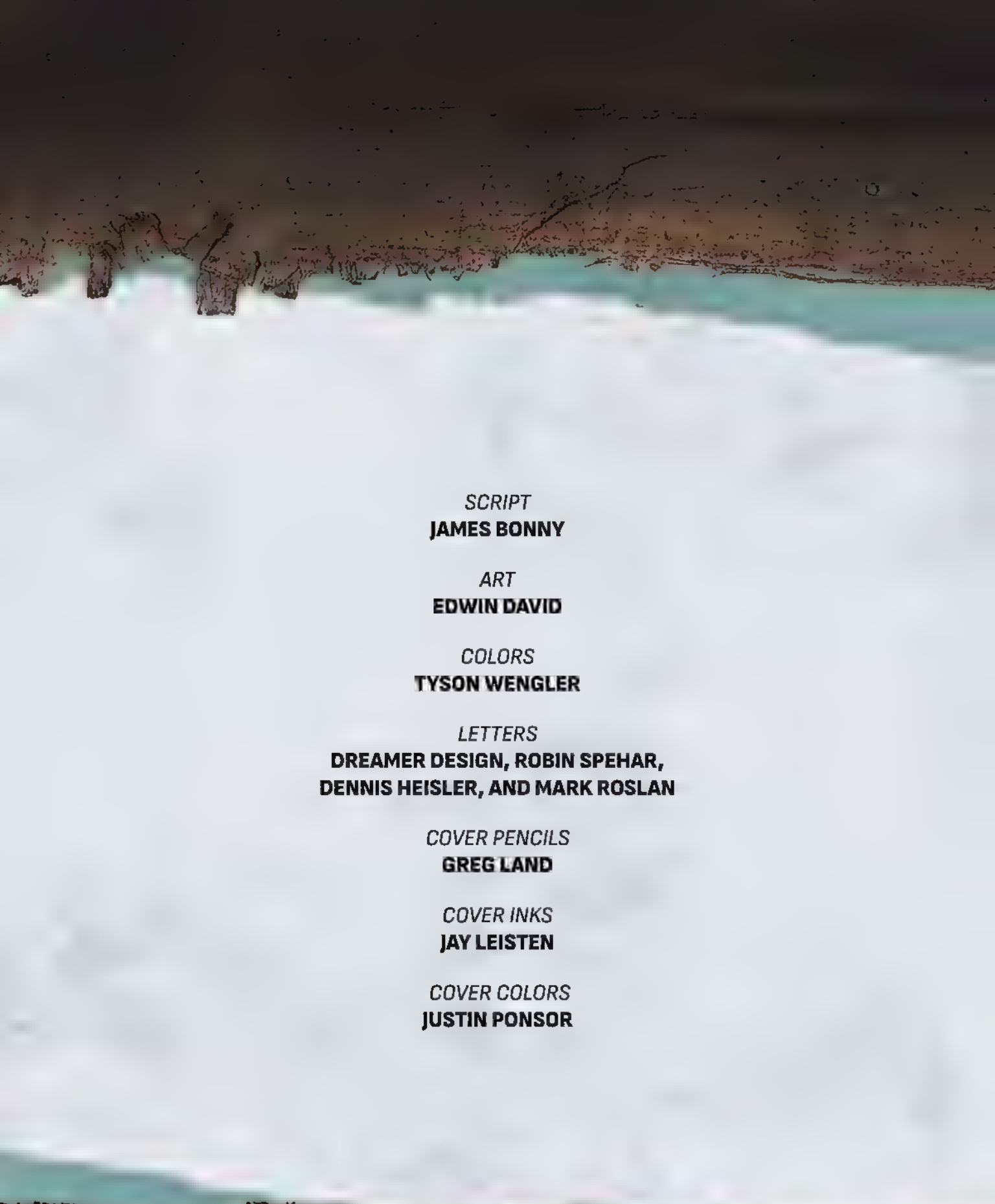
TREVOR DOYLE, I AM HEREBY PLACING YOU UNDER ARREST FOR THE MURDERS OF ANGELA TILLY, CINDY BECK, MADELYNN LIVINGSTON...


SUNRISE OVER THE HEEL STONE. A SIGHT WHICH HASN'T CHANGED FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.

IT SEEMS YOU WERE RIGHT, MISS CROFT. ABOUT EVERYTHING. EVEN THE PART ABOUT THE MYSTICAL ENERGY.
SOME THINGS YOU HAVE TO SEE TO BELIEVE, INSPECTOR CASTLEBERRY. TAKE IT FROM ME.
DOYLE'S TWO SURVIVING FRIENDS ARE EAGER TO TALK. IT SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT TO SEND HIM AWAY FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.
THEN I'D SAY HE'S GETTING OFF EASY.


I CAME HERE AS A CHILD. AND THE LIVING ROCKS REMEMBERED ME.
PERHAPS NOW THEY'LL FORGET ABOUT ME.
I'LL DO MY BEST TO FORGET ABOUT THEM.
AND HOPE THE DREAM NEVER RETURNS.
THE END
NEXT ISSUE: LARA COMES FACE TO FACE WITH... CHASE CARVER!

LAND
J-PO



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COVER PENCILS
GREG LAND

COVER INKS
JAY LEISTEN

COVER COLORS
JUSTIN PONSOR

CENTRAL NEW GUINEA.
IN MY LIFE, I'VE SEEN MANY STRANGE THINGS...
THINGS MOST PEOPLE WOULDN'T BELIEVE.
NOT UNLESS THEY SAW THEM WITH THEIR OWN EYES. AND EVEN THEN...
...THEY STILL MIGHT HAVE THEIR DOUBTS. OR EVEN DOUBT THEIR OWN SANITY.
THUD!
KKSHSHSH!
WHICH IS SOMETHING I CAN RELATE TO AT THE MOMENT.

KKSHSHSH!
THINGS HAVE GOTTEN SO STRANGE SO FAST, IT ALMOST SEEMS LIKE A DREAM. OR RATHER, A NIGHTMARE.
ONLY A FEW HOURS AGO, I WAS HEADED TO SOUTHERN NEW GUINEA TO SEARCH FOR A FABLED LOST TEMPLE. NOTHING TOO UNUSUAL THERE.
RAOUL AND I WERE FLYING OVER A REGION KNOWN AS THE ZONE OF DEATH, NEW GUINEA'S VERSION OF THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE. DURING WORLD WAR II, THIS AREA CLAIMED SCORES OF AIRCRAFT.
THE LOCAL TRIBESMEN HAVE AVOIDED THIS REGION FOR CENTURIES. THEY BELIEVE IT TO BE CURSED BY AN EVIL SPIRIT.
PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE BELIEVED THE LEGENDS.
THE ZONE OF DEATH CLAIMED ONE MORE AIRCRAFT...
KKVAASH!
...AND ONE MORE LIFE.

I BURIED A DEAR FRIEND, AND THEN SET OUT ON FOOT.
IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I ENCOUNTERED... IT. AT FIRST, I THOUGHT IT WAS BALL LIGHTNING.
KSHKSH!
KKTSHTSHTSH!
UNTIL IT SEEMED TO BECOME AWARE OF MY PRESENCE...
KKTSHTSHTSH!
AND ATTACKED.
KK-TSHASH!
IT SEEMS QUITE INTENT ON DESTROYING ME. AS FOR WHAT IT IS...
I'LL CONCERN MYSELF WITH THAT CONUNDRUM LATER.

WHOA!
BLOODY HELL.
WORTH A TRY, I GUESS...
BOAM!
BOOAM!
BOOAM!
KKTSH-CHOOAAM!
AAAAHHH...!
GIVE YA A HAND THERE, RED?

CHASE...?!
HEY, DARLIN'. DI'JA MISS ME?
THIS HAS TO BE A DREAM!

BUT... YOU'RE...
WE CAN CHITCHAT LATER, SUNSHINE. RIGHT NOW, YOU AND I GOTTA...
RUN!
KKTSHTSHTSH!
HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING?
PERHAPS I CAN ACCEPT THE EXISTENCE OF THAT FLYING INFERNO THING CHASING AFTER ME...
KKTSHTSHTSH!
BUT I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT CHASE CARVER IS HERE WITH ME NOW.
BECAUSE THAT JUST CAN'T BE.

CHASE CARVER SWEPT ME OFF MY FEET WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND A BIT NAIVE. HE WAS A HANDSOME, CHARMING ROGUE, HUNGRY FOR A BIG SCORE.
I SOON LEARNED THAT I WAS PART OF THAT BIG SCORE.
CHASE CARVER USED ME. STOLE FROM ME. HURT ME DEEPER THAN ANY MAN, BEFORE OR SINCE. I NEVER WANTED TO SEE HIM AGAIN.
BUT LATER, IN NEPAL, CHASE CARVER AND I COLLIDED, HEAD ON. WE WERE BOTH AFTER THE SAME THING, THE FABLED MEDUSA MASK.
AS DISTASTEFUL AS I FOUND IT, WE WERE FORCED TO WORK TOGETHER.
WE WENT ON TO HAVE MORE THAN OUR SHARE OF ADVENTURES. NOT TO MENTION CLOSE CALLS. THOUGH IT DIDN'T ERASE THE PAST, WE ONCE AGAIN GREW CLOSER.
AND JUST WHEN I BEGAN TO DISCOVER THE LOVE I HAD FOR THE MAN, CHASE CARVER HAD A CLOSE CALL HE WASN'T ABLE TO DODGE...
I BURIED CHASE CARVER, ALONG WITH A PIECE OF MY HEART, IN A HONDURAS JUNGLE.
AND I MOVED ON.

SO HOW COULD CHASE CARVER BE HERE WITH ME NOW?
HOW?
KKTSHTSHTSH!
UNLESS...
KKTSHCHOOM!
I DIDN'T SURVIVE THE PLANE CRASH.
MAYBE I'M...
KKTSHCHA!
...IN HELL!

WHA-HUH?!
KTSH-CHOAM!
I JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE, RED.
YOU...
YOU MIGHT WANNA SAY "THANK..."
"KEWW...!"
BFOOPH!
OR NOT.

WHO ARE YOU? OR PERHAPS, MORE TO THE POINT... WHAT ARE YOU?
D'JA TAKE A KNOCK ON THE NOGGIN? WHO DO I LOOK LIKE?
I KNOW WHO YOU SEEM TO BE...
...BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS IMPOSSIBLE." ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU TOLD ME BACK IN HONDURAS?
YES, I DID. AND NOT LONG AFTER THAT, I BURIED YOU THERE.
SO HOW CAN YOU BE HERE?
LOOK, RED, I AIN'T EXACTLY SURE HOW I GOT HERE. BUT I DO KNOW WHY I'M HERE.
LET'S START WITH THAT THEN.
I'M HERE TO HELP YA.
WELL THAT PROVES YOU'RE NOT CHASE CARVER. BECAUSE HE NEVER HELPED ANYBODY BUT HIMSELF.

THAT ISN'T TRUE, DARLIN'.
THE HELL IT'S NOT. YOU... I MEAN, HE... WAS ONE OF THE MOST SELFISH AND SELF-SERVING EXCUSES FOR A HUMAN BEING I EVER HAD THE DISPLEASURE TO MEET.
YOU'RE... STILL ANGRY WITH ME?
I TRIED TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT. TRIED TO MAKE UP FOR THE CARELESS JERK I USED TO BE...
STOP TALKING LIKE YOU'RE REALLY HIM! YOU'RE NOT CHASE CARVER!
TRY ME, RED. LEMME PROVE IT TO YA.
ALL RIGHT, THEN. I'LL MAKE IT EASY.
CHASE CARVER WOULD ALWAYS LEAVE BEHIND A CALLING CARD TO LET THE COMPETITION KNOW HE GOT TO THE PRIZE FIRST.
WHICH CARD FROM THE DECK WAS IT?
IT WASN'T A CARD. IT WAS A CHESS PIECE. THE KNIGHT, TO BE EXACT.
WAS THAT YOUR BEST SHOT?
HARDLY. BUT I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR GAMES RIGHT NOW.
I'VE GOT TO GET PAST WHATEVER THAT THING IS OUT THERE.

THERE'S NO SIGN OF IT.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT AIN'T OUT THERE. REMEMBER THOSE ASSASSINS BACK IN NEPAL. THERE WAS NO SIGN OF THEM UNTIL THEY STARTED LETTIN' THEIR ARROWS FLY.
YES, I REMEMBER. NOW WILL YOU PLEASE STOP BRINGING UP THE PAST? IT'S QUITE ANNOYING.
WE'VE GOT TO MAKE IT TO THE TREES. WE'RE SITTING DUCKS OUT IN THE OPEN.
MORE LIKE HANGIN' DUCKS.
LOOK OUT, RED! BOGEY AT THREE O'CLOCK!
KKTSHTSHTSH!
KKTSHCHOOWWW!

KTSH CHOAM!
LARA!
KKTSH-TSHOAM!
OOOMPH!
KKTSHTSHTSH!
IT'S IGNORING CHASE.
SO WHY DO I MERIT THE SPECIAL ATTENTION?

MAYBE BECAUSE I'M THE ONLY HUMAN BEING HERE.
KKTSHA VAOOSH!
MAYBE THAT THING BACK THERE... THAT THING THAT LOOKS LIKE CHASE, ACTS LIKE CHASE, EVEN SMELLS LIKE CHASE...
MAYBE IT'S NOT HUMAN.
KKTSHTSHTSH!
OR MAYBE I AM IN HELL.
LARA! WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?!
THERE YOU ARE, RED.
YES, HERE I AM.
AND HERE THEY ARE.

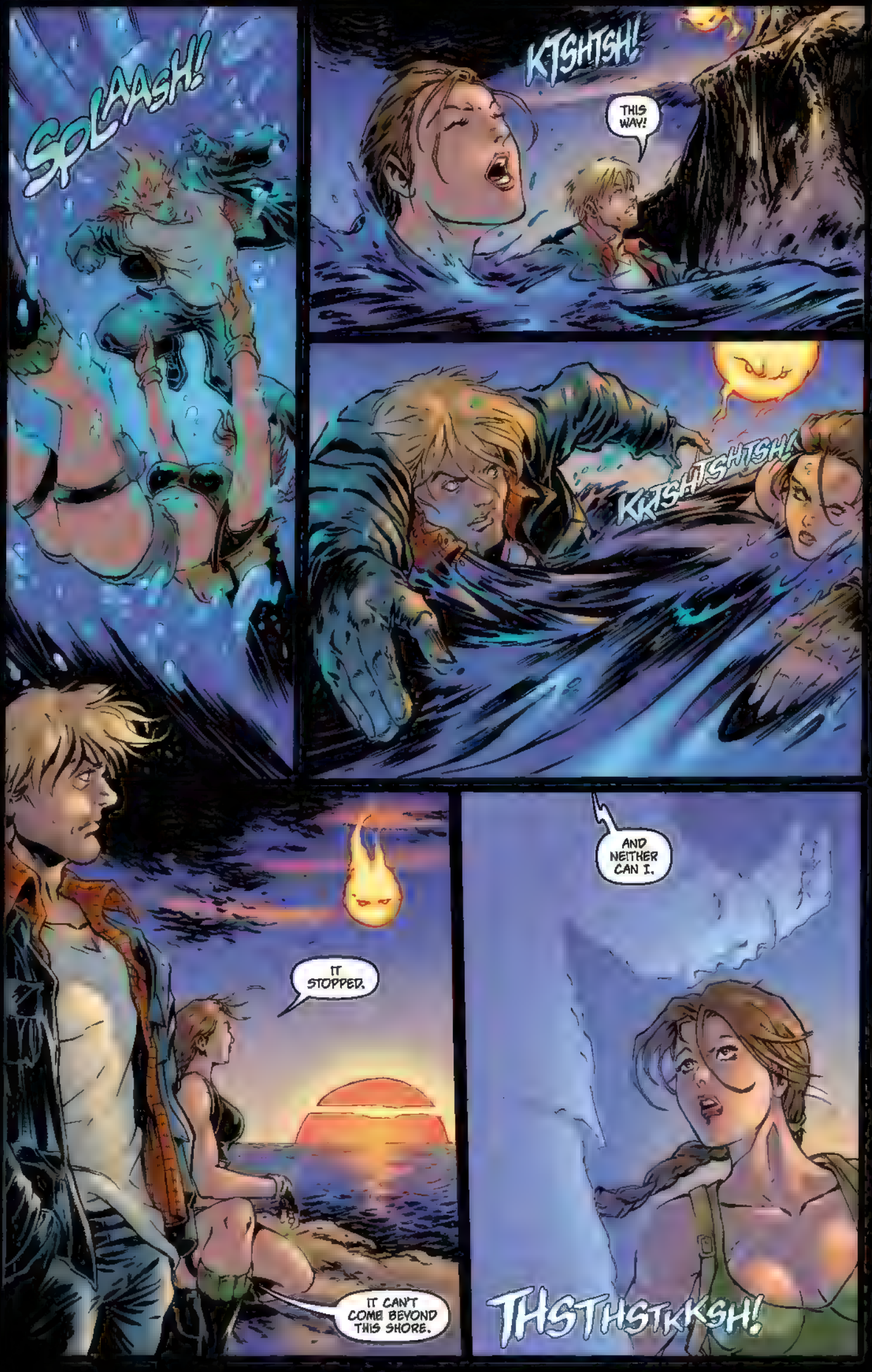
UNDOUBTEDLY, PEOPLE LIKE ME WHO CRASHED HERE. WHO WERE TOYED WITH, PUT THROUGH THE SAME DEMONIC GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK...
BEFORE THEY WERE FINALLY FRIED BY THAT INFERNO OUT THERE.
WELL, UNLIKE THEM, DARLIN', YOU STILL HAVE A FIGHTING CHANCE.
I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING YOU KNOW!
WHAT IS THAT THING OUT THERE?!
YOUR DEATH... UNLESS YOU LET ME HELP YOU.
YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING! YOU'VE GOT YOUR OWN AGENDA! YOU'RE PLAYING GAMES WITH ME!
MAYBE YOU ARE CHASE CARVER AFTER ALL!
YOU'RE LOSIN' YOUR HEAD, RED.
WRONG. I'M LOSING YOU.
AS SOON AS I GOT AWAY FROM YOU, I GOT AWAY FROM THAT THING. FOR ALL I KNOW, YOU'RE DRAWING IT TO ME.
SO LONG, CHASE CARVER.

MAYBE I AM LOSING MY MIND...
BECAUSE PART OF ME IS BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THAT HE REALLY IS CHASE CARVER.
ALL OF THE ANGER I'VE BEEN CARRYING AROUND INSIDE ME... ALONG WITH THE FEELINGS OF LOSS... THEY'VE BEEN BROUGHT TO THE SURFACE. OLD WOUNDS TORN OPEN AND MADE FRESH.
CAN I REALLY LEAVE HIM BEHIND, NOT KNOWING WHETHER OR NOT HE'S REALLY CHASE?
CAN I LIVE WITH THAT?
KTSHKSH!
AND WHAT IF HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH? WHAT IF I REALLY DO NEED HIM TO SURVIVE THIS?
KTSHKSH!
KKTSHTSHTSH!
I GUESS I'LL SOON FIND OUT.

NOW...
KKTSHTSHTSH!
YOU... ARE...
KKTSHTSHTSH!
KKTSHTSHTSH!
ALONE!
KKTSHTSHTSH!
YOU... CHOSE... THIS!
WHAT ARE YOU?!
YOUR DEATH!

LARA!
KKTSHTSHTSHTSH!
IT'LL KILL YOU, LARA!
YOU'VE GOTTA COME TO ME!
CHASE... I... CAN'T.
KKTSHTSHTSH!
IT WANTS YOU WEAK. YOU HAVE TO BE STRONG, LARA. AND YOU HAVE TO TRUST ME.
COME TO ME, LARA! DO IT! NOW!
NOOOO!
KKTSHTSHTSH!
KKTSHTSHTSH!

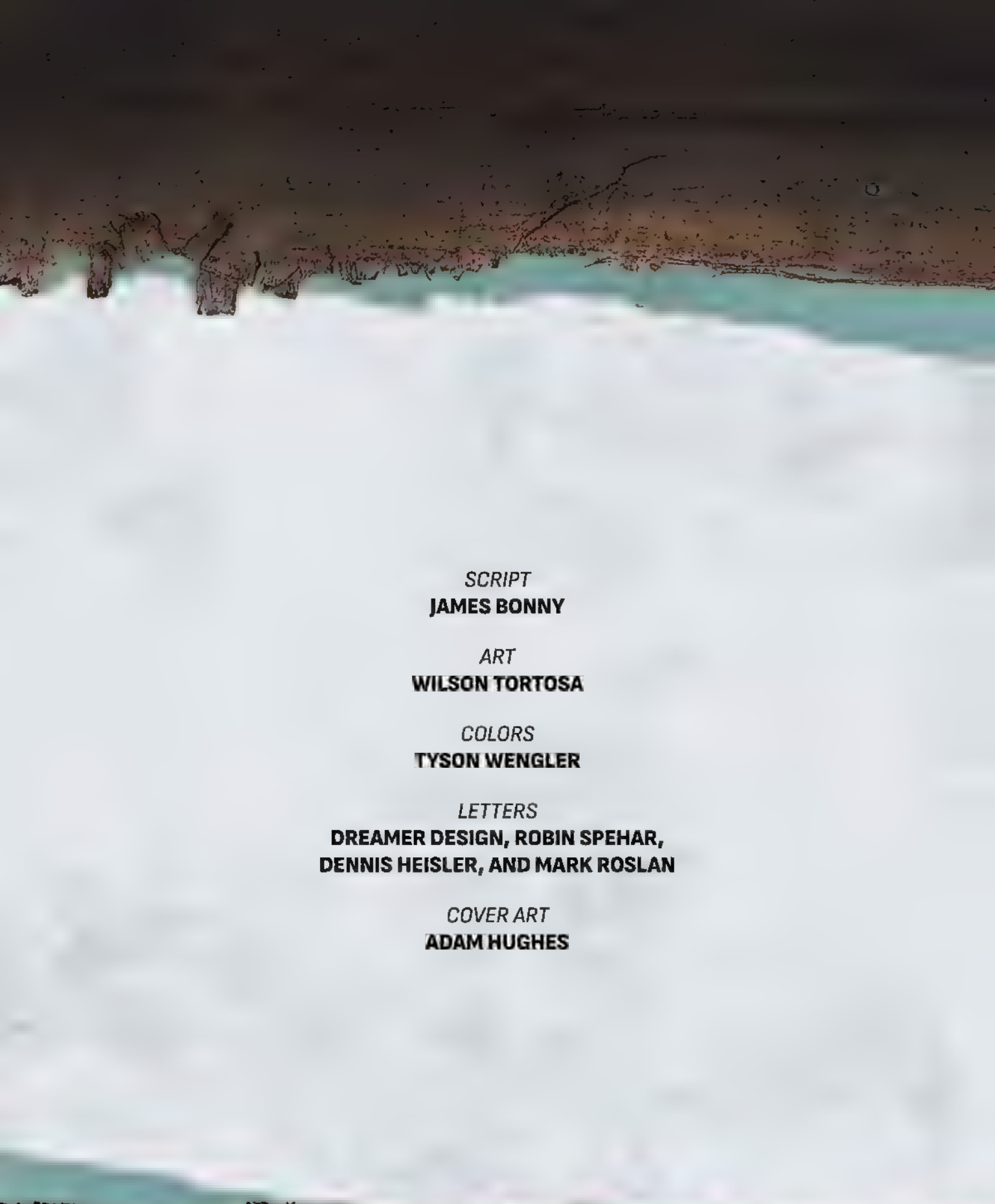
THIS IS CHASE CARVER.
THE CHASE CARVER I WANT TO BELIEVE IN.


SPLAASH!
KTSHTSH!
THIS WAY!
KKTSHTSHTSH!
IT STOPPED.
IT CAN'T COME BEYOND THIS SHORE.
AND NEITHER CAN I.
THSTHSTKKSH!

I AM SO PLEASED THAT YOU SURVIVED.
WHAT ARE YOU...?
THE BALANCE... TO THAT MALEVOLENCE.
YIN AND YANG.
IT HAS EXISTED HERE SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME. AND SO HAVE I.
THOUGH I TAKE ON MANY DIFFERENT GUISES, MY PURPOSE IS ALWAYS THE SAME. TO HELP THOSE TRAPPED HERE.
WHY DID YOU BECOME CHASE CARVER?
I PEERED INTO YOUR MEMORIES AND KNEW HE WAS THE ONE PERSON YOU HAVE LONGED TO SEE AGAIN.
AND NOW HE'S GONE.
AGAIN.
YOU AIN'T GONNA WALK AWAY WITHOUT SAYIN' GOODBYE, ARE YA, DARLIN'?

I NEVER DID GET A CHANCE TO SAY GOODBYE TO CHASE WHEN HE WAS ALIVE...
OR TELL HIM THAT I LOVED HIM.
THIS IS THE CHASE CARVER I WANT TO BELIEVE IN.
GOODBYE, CHASE.
I LOVE YOU.
THE END
NEXT ISSUE: THE SPIRIT WALKER.

SPIRIT WALKER PART 1



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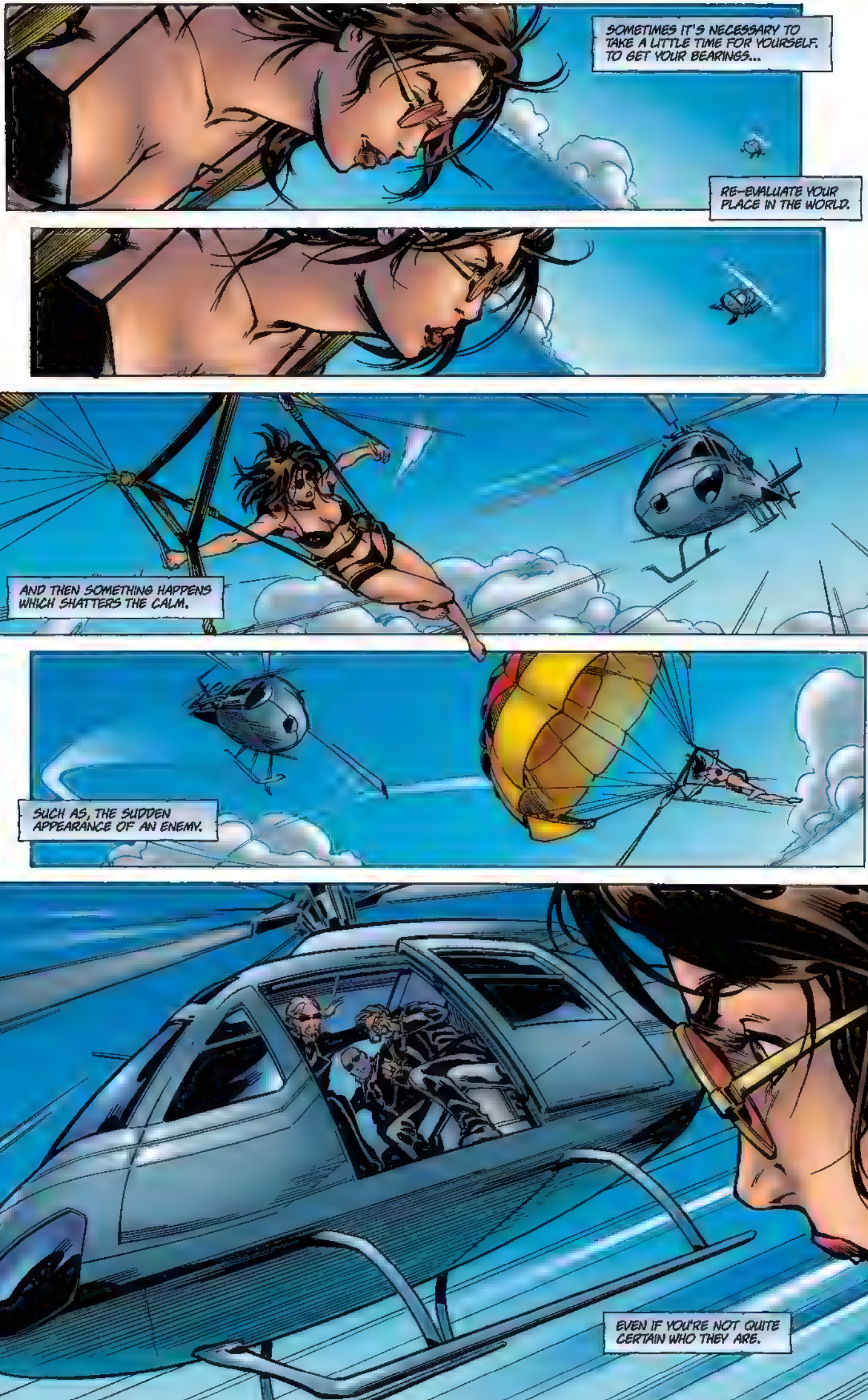
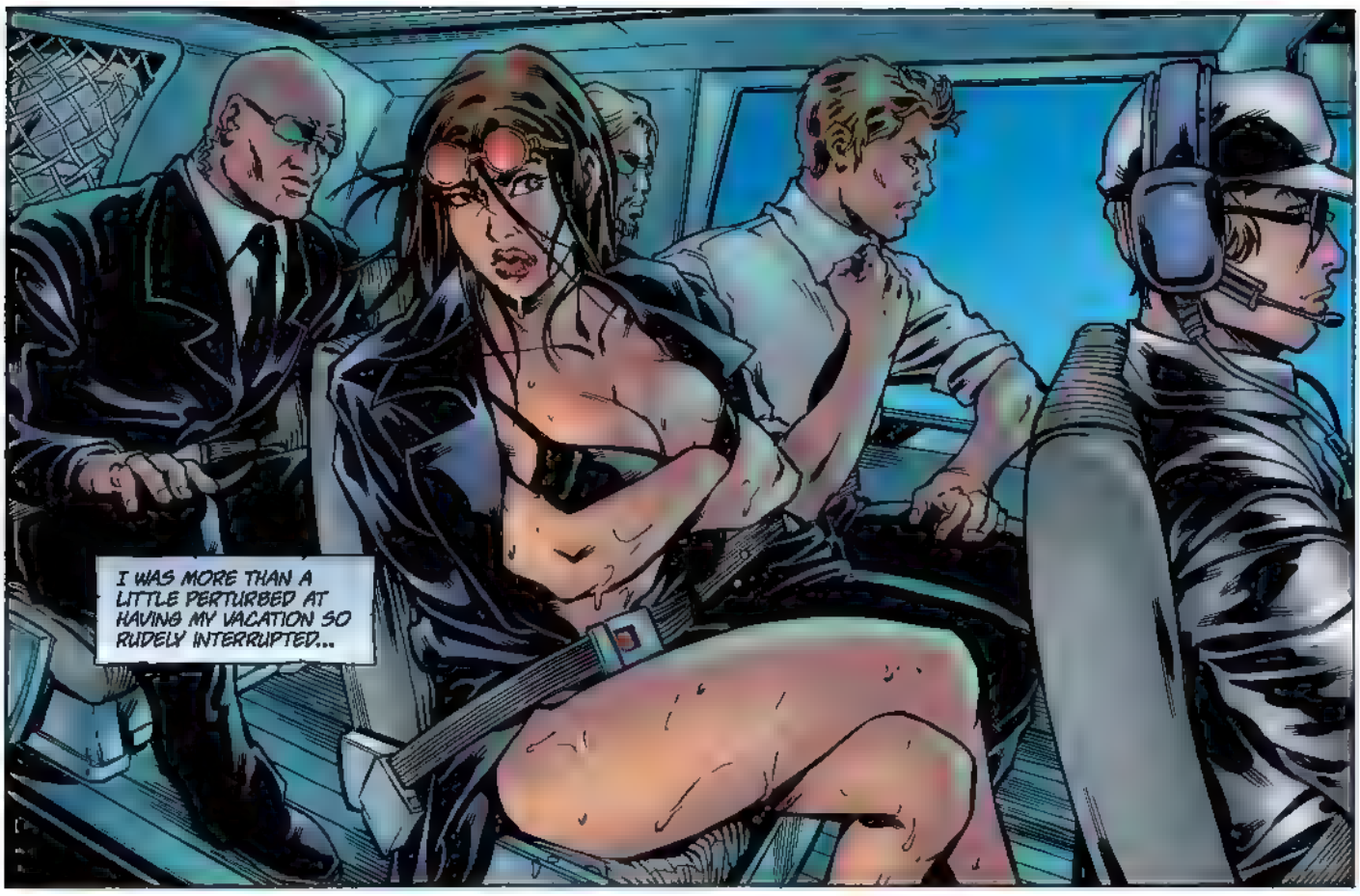
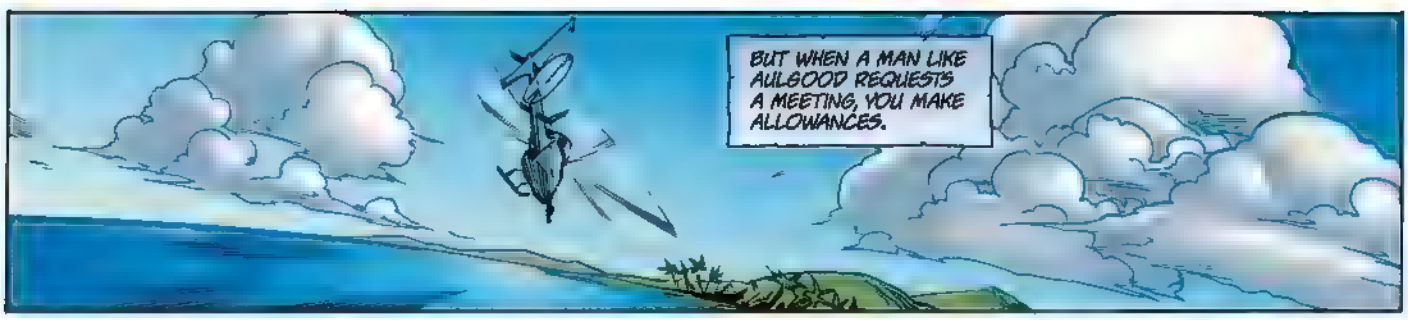
COVER ART
ADAM HUGHES

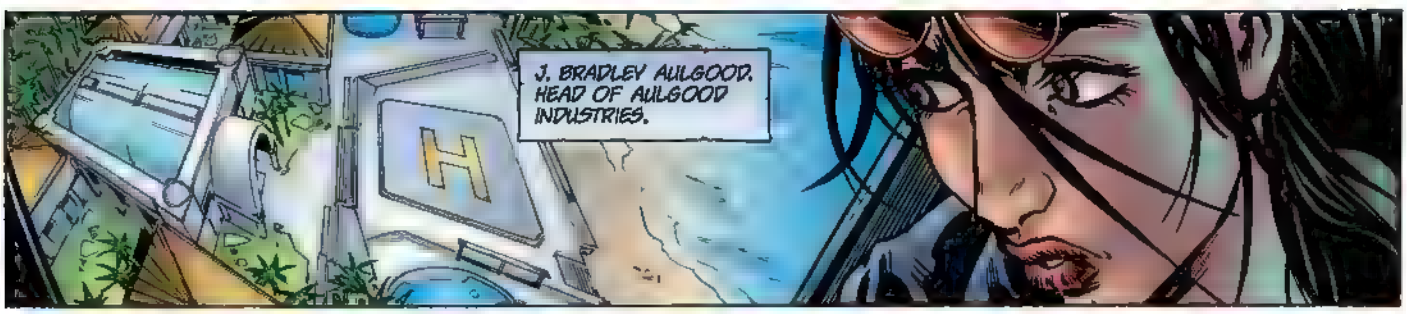
MAUI, HAWAII.
PARADISE.
AFTER WHAT I WENT THROUGH IN NEW GUINEA, THIS IS JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED.
WHEN YOU UNEXPECTEDLY COME FACE TO FACE WITH SOMEONE YOU LOVED, WHO IS IN FACT DEAD AND BURIED, IT TENDS TO SHAKE YOUR WORLD A BIT.*
*THAT WHOULD BE CHASE CARVER, LAST ISSUE - SCOTT
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO UNWIND AND REGROUP.


SOMETIMES IT'S NECESSARY TO TAKE A LITTLE TIME FOR YOURSELF. TO GET YOUR BEARINGS...
RE-EVALUATE YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD.
AND THEN SOMETHING HAPPENS WHICH SHATTERS THE CALM.
SUCH AS, THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF AN ENEMY.
EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT QUITE CERTAIN WHO THEY ARE.

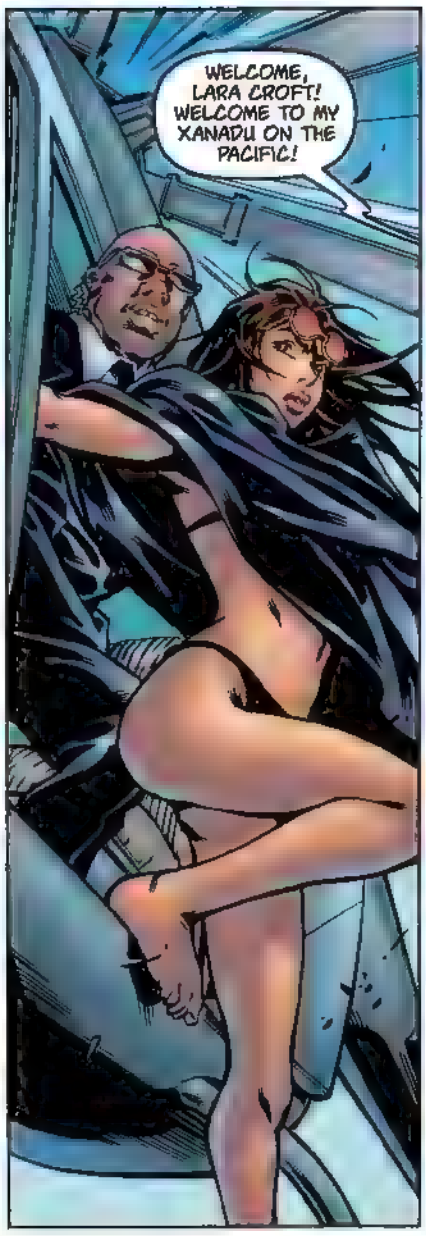
IT'S ALWAYS BEST TO ERROR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION.
FIND SAFE HAVEN WHEREVER YOU CAN.
THE SAFETY OF THE DEER.
THOUGH NOT QUITE DEEP ENOUGH TO ESCAPE A RIFLE'S BULLET.
DYING IN PARADISE. I SUPPOSE THERE ARE WORSE WAYS TO GO.
I'M SORRY IF WE FRIGHTENED YOU, MISS CROFT, BUT MR. AULGOOD WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH YOU.
Aulgood Industries


I WAS MORE THAN A LITTLE PERTURBED AT HAVING MY VACATION SO RUDELY INTERRUPTED...

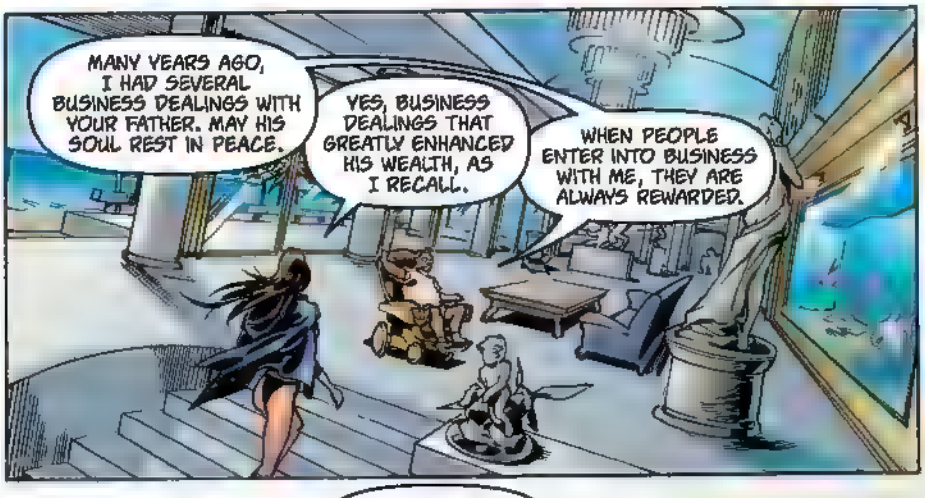

BUT WHEN A MAN LIKE AULGOOD REQUESTS A MEETING, YOU MAKE ALLOWANCES.

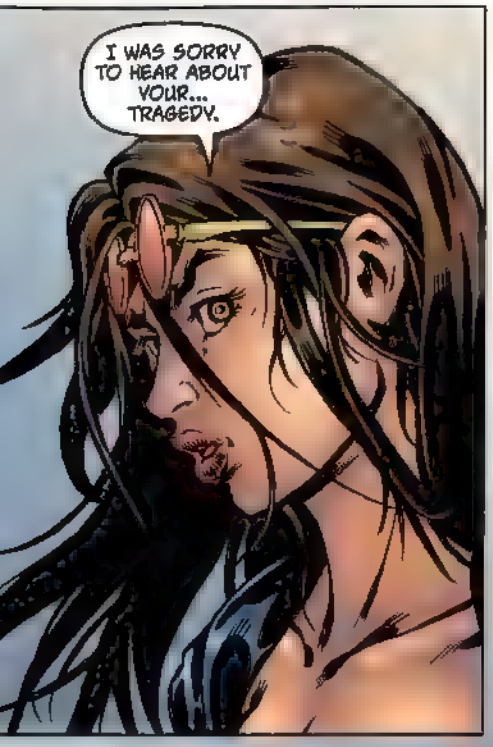

J. BRADLEY AULGOOD. HEAD OF AULGOOD INDUSTRIES.

AND ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST MEN ON EARTH.
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
THE AULGOOD ESTATE, HONOLULU, HAWAII.

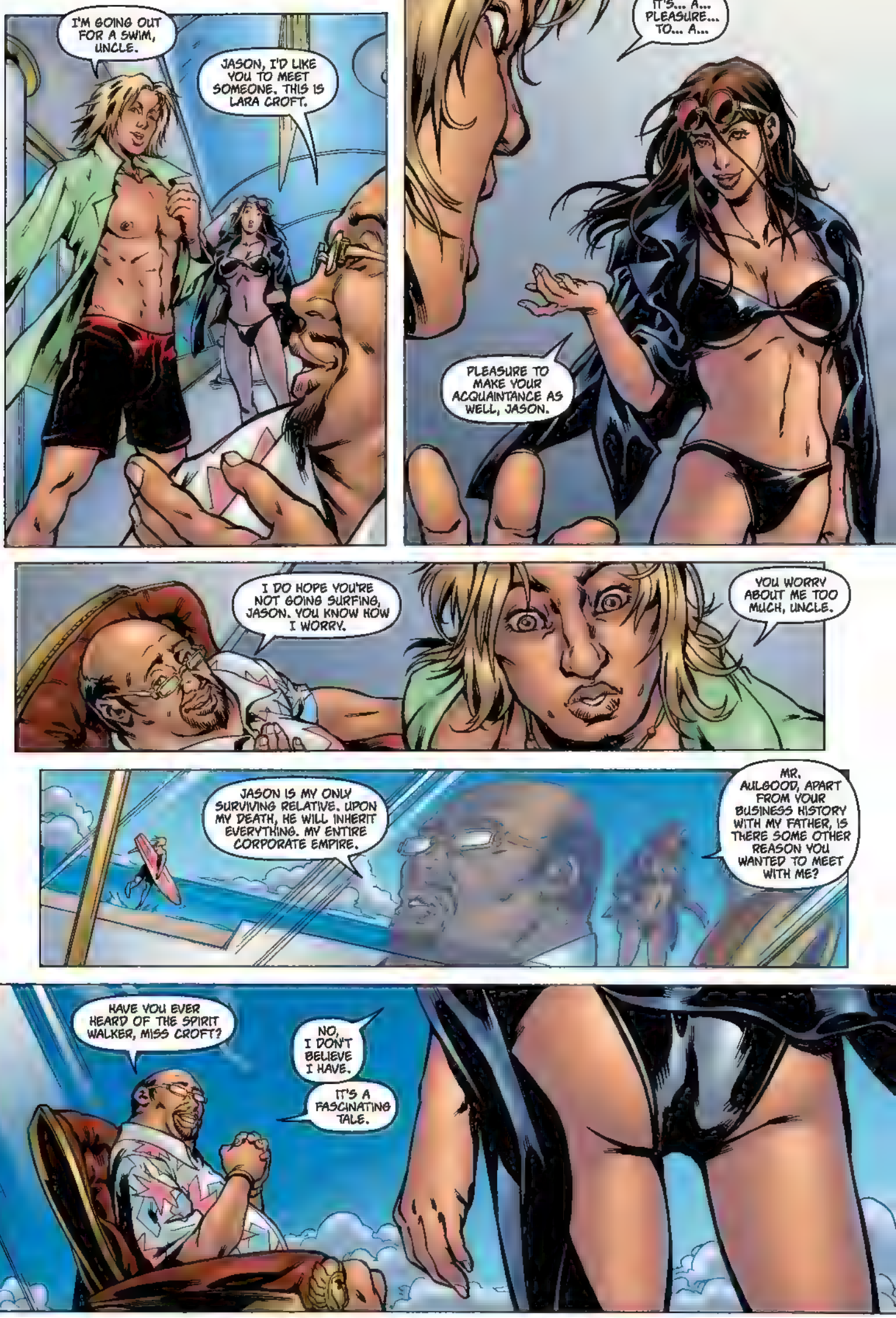

WELCOME, LARA CROFT! WELCOME TO MY XANADU ON THE PACIFIC!

WHEN I HEARD YOU WERE VISITING THE ISLANDS, I SIMPLY HAD TO MEET YOU. I'VE FOLLOWED YOUR EXPLOITS WITH GREAT FASCINATION.
AND I'M WELL AWARE OF YOUR REPUTATION, MR. AULGOOD.
PLEASE, CALL ME BRAD. ALL MY FRIENDS DO.


MANY YEARS AGO, I HAD SEVERAL BUSINESS DEALINGS WITH YOUR FATHER. MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE.
YES, BUSINESS DEALINGS THAT GREATLY ENHANCED HIS WEALTH, AS I RECALL.
WHEN PEOPLE ENTER INTO BUSINESS WITH ME, THEY ARE ALWAYS REWARDED.

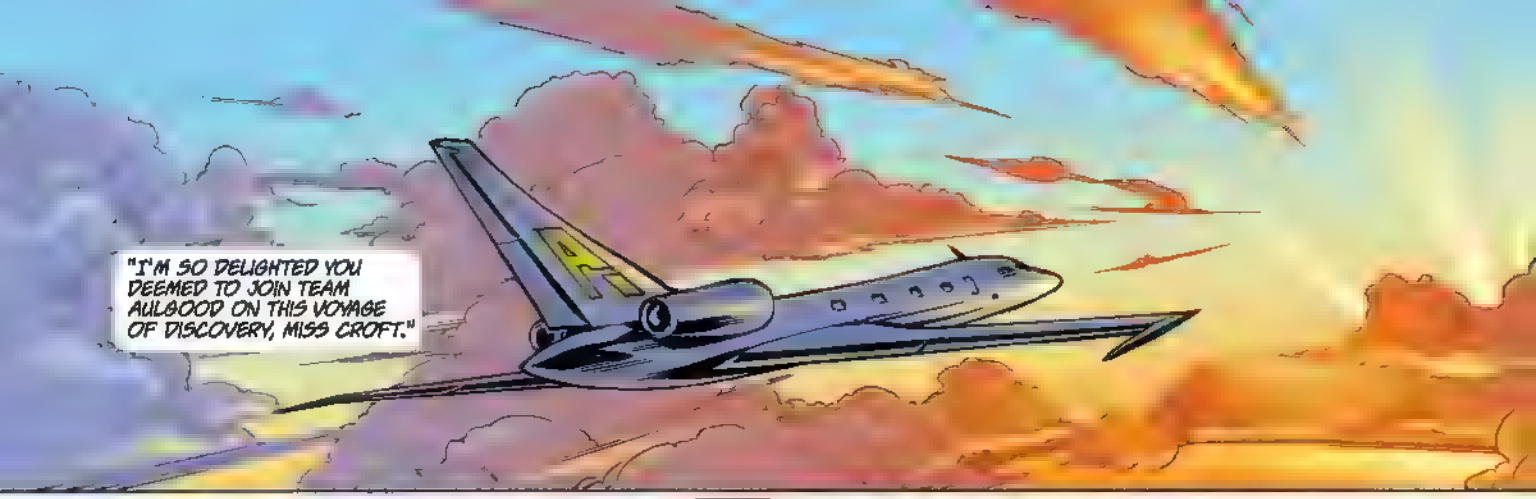

I WAS SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR... TRAGEDY.

BLESS YOU, KIND LADY. IT SEEMS BUT A DISTANT MEMORY NOW.
A PRIEST, WASN'T IT?
YES, POOR DELUDED MAN. HE ACTUALLY BELIEVED I WAS EVIL INCARNATE, HERE ON EARTH TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE COMING OF THE BEAST.
AND HE BELIEVED THE SOLUTION WAS A BULLET.
I ONLY HOPE HE'S GETTING THE CARE HE NEEDS, CONFINED IN THAT MENTAL INSTITUTION.
YOU'RE QUITE FORGIVING.
ANGER IS SUCH A DESTRUCTIVE THING.

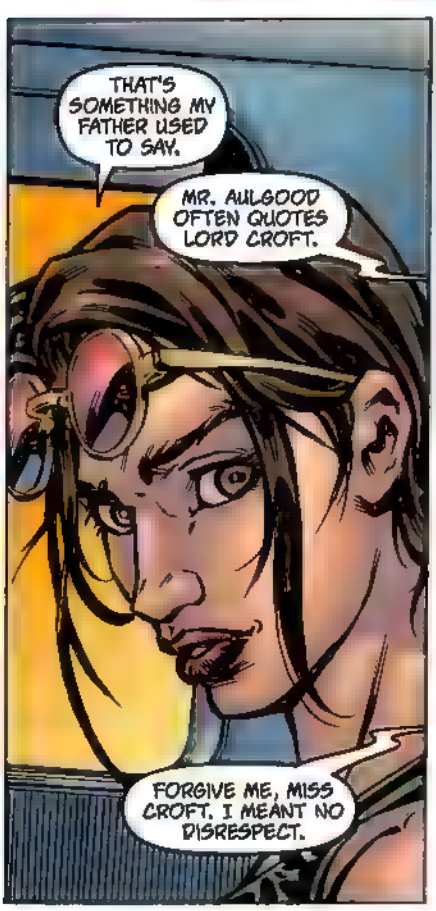

I'M GOING OUT FOR A SWIM, UNCLE.
JASON, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET SOMEONE. THIS IS LARA CROFT.
IT'S... A... PLEASURE... TO... A...
PLEASURE TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE AS WELL, JASON.
I DO HOPE YOU'RE NOT GOING SURFING, JASON. YOU KNOW HOW I WORRY.
YOU WORRY ABOUT ME TOO MUCH, UNCLE.
JASON IS MY ONLY SURVIVING RELATIVE. UPON MY DEATH, HE WILL INHERIT EVERYTHING. MY ENTIRE CORPORATE EMPIRE.
MR. AULGOOD, APART FROM YOUR BUSINESS HISTORY WITH MY FATHER, IS THERE SOME OTHER REASON YOU WANTED TO MEET WITH ME?
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE SPIRIT WALKER, MISS CROFT?
NO, I DON'T BELIEVE I HAVE.
IT'S A FASCINATING TALE.

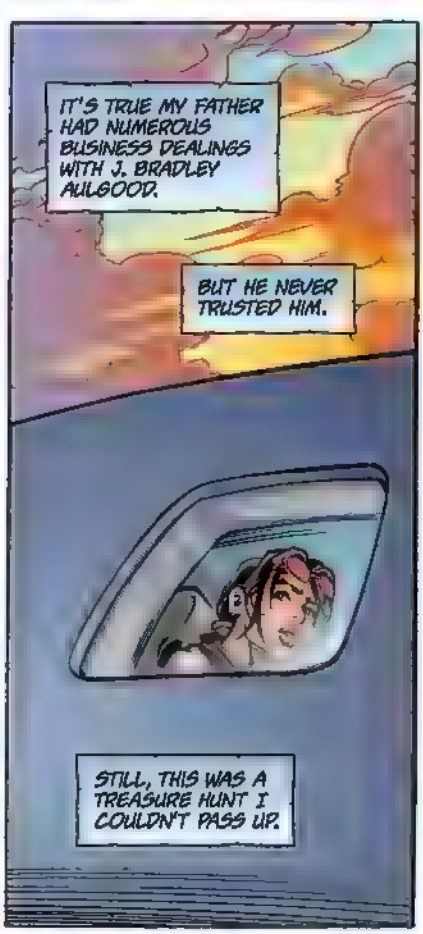
"THE SPIRIT WALKER WAS A MYSTICAL ABORIGINE CHARM, SAID TO BE FIVE THOUSAND YEARS OLD.
"IT WAS USED IN SACRED RITUALS. IT WAS SAID TO POSSESS INCREDIBLE POWERS.
"IN 1793, THE SPIRIT WALKER WAS CLAIMED FOR ENGLAND BY CAPTAIN JOHN CARDIFF OF THE BRITISH NAVAL VESSEL H.M.S. GRIFFIN.
"CLAIMED AFTER HE MASSACRED AN ENTIRE TRIBE OF ABORIGINES TO GET IT.
"ON THE VOYAGE BACK TO ENGLAND, A VIOLENT STORM CAUSED THE GRIFFIN TO RUN AGROUND ON A ROCKY NEW ZEALAND COAST.
"THE CREW BLAMED THE STORM ON THE THEFT OF THE SPIRIT WALKER. AND THEY TURNED THEIR FURY ON CAPTAIN CARDIFF.
"IT WAS SAID THAT CAPTAIN CARDIFF HID THE SPIRIT WALKER SHORTLY BEFORE HIS CREW CAME UPON HIM. THEY BEAT HIM TO DEATH, THEN STRUNG UP HIS CORPSE TO ROT.
"AND THE SPIRIT WALKER HAS YET TO BE FOUND TO THIS DAY."

A FASCINATING TALE INDEED.
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT PIQUE YOUR INTEREST.
AND I THINK YOU'RE JUST THE PERSON TO FIND THE SPIRIT WALKER... FOR ME.
AND YOU WANT IT... WHY?
I HAVE A LARGE CORPORATE PRESENCE IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. I'D VERY MUCH LIKE TO RETURN THE SPIRIT WALKER TO THE ABORIGINE PEOPLE AS A GESTURE OF GOODWILL.
I'LL OUTFIT YOU WITH WHATEVER YOU NEED. AND YOU'LL BE ACCOMPANIED BY MY MAN, HOLLISTER, ALONG WITH TWO OF MY BEST OPERATIVES, MR. GEARING AND MR. FIELDS.
I WORK ALONE.
PLEASE, MISS CROFT. I MUST INSIST.
HOW COULD I EVER FACE YOUR DEAR FATHER IN THE AFTERLIFE IF I PUT HIS DAUGHTER AT RISK?
ALL RIGHT, MR. AULGOOD. WE'LL DO IT YOUR WAY.
PLEASE, CALL ME BRAD. ALL MY FRIENDS DO.


"I'M SO DELIGHTED YOU DEEMED TO JOIN TEAM AULGOOD ON THIS VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY, MISS CROFT."

I HAVE BEEN MR. AULGOOD'S EMPLOYEE FOR OVER A DECADE, AND I CAN HONESTLY SAY THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN THE GOOD GENTLEMAN HAPPIER THAN WHEN WE LEFT HIM.
TICKLED PINK AT THE PROSPECT OF OBTAINING THE SPIRIT WALKER, IS HE, HOLLISTER?
BECAUSE HE KNOWS WHAT IT WILL MEAN TO AUSTRALIA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHEN HE RETURNS THEIR SACRED RELIC TO THEM.
MR. AULGOOD LIVES TO SERVE HIS FELLOW MAN. HE'S ONE OF THE MOST GENEROUS MEN ON EARTH.
NOT TO MENTION ONE OF THE RICHEST.
WELL, OF COURSE. AFTER ALL, IT'S DIFFICULT FOR A PAUPER TO BE A PATRON, EH, MISS CROFT?


THAT'S SOMETHING MY FATHER USED TO SAY.
MR. AULGOOD OFTEN QUOTES LORD CROFT.
FORGIVE ME, MISS CROFT. I MEANT NO DISRESPECT.


IT'S TRUE MY FATHER HAD NUMEROUS BUSINESS DEALINGS WITH J. BRADLEY AULGOOD.
BUT HE NEVER TRUSTED HIM.
STILL, THIS WAS A TREASURE HUNT I COULDN'T PASS UP.

HOPEFULLY THE CLUES LIE WITHIN THIS JOURNAL, PENNED BY THE FIRST MATE OF THE H.M.S. GRIFFIN, ONE DANIEL SWEETMAN. AULGOOD HANDED IT TO ME MOMENTS BEFORE OUR DEPARTURE FROM HAWAII.

ACCORDING TO FIRST MATE SWEETMAN, THE GRIFFIN SET SAIL FOR ENGLAND FROM SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA UNDER CLEAR SKIES. BUT SOON A POWERFUL STORM APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE AND BLEW THE VESSEL OFF COURSE.

THE SHIP WRECKED OFF THE COAST OF NEW ZEALAND'S SOUTH ISLAND, NEAR THE REGION KNOWN AS FIORDLAND.

BELIEVING THAT THEIR FATE WAS DUE TO AN ABORIGINE CURSE PLACED UPON THEM BECAUSE OF THE STOLEN CHARM, FIRST MATE SWEETMAN LED THE OTHER MUTINEERS IN PURSUIT OF CAPTAIN CARDIFF.

AFTER LOSING SIGHT OF CAPTAIN CARDIFF, THE MUTINEERS CAME ACROSS A GROUP OF MAORI TRIBESMEN. THE ENCOUNTER ENDED PEACEFULLY, WITH THE MAORI POINTING THE MUTINEERS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. THEY SEEMED TO SENSE THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT WALKER.

SWEETMAN SPOTTED CARDIFF SCALING DOWN A STEEP HILLSIDE IN A REGION LINED WITH SHEER ROCK WALLS, AND LED THE MUTINEERS IN PURSUIT.

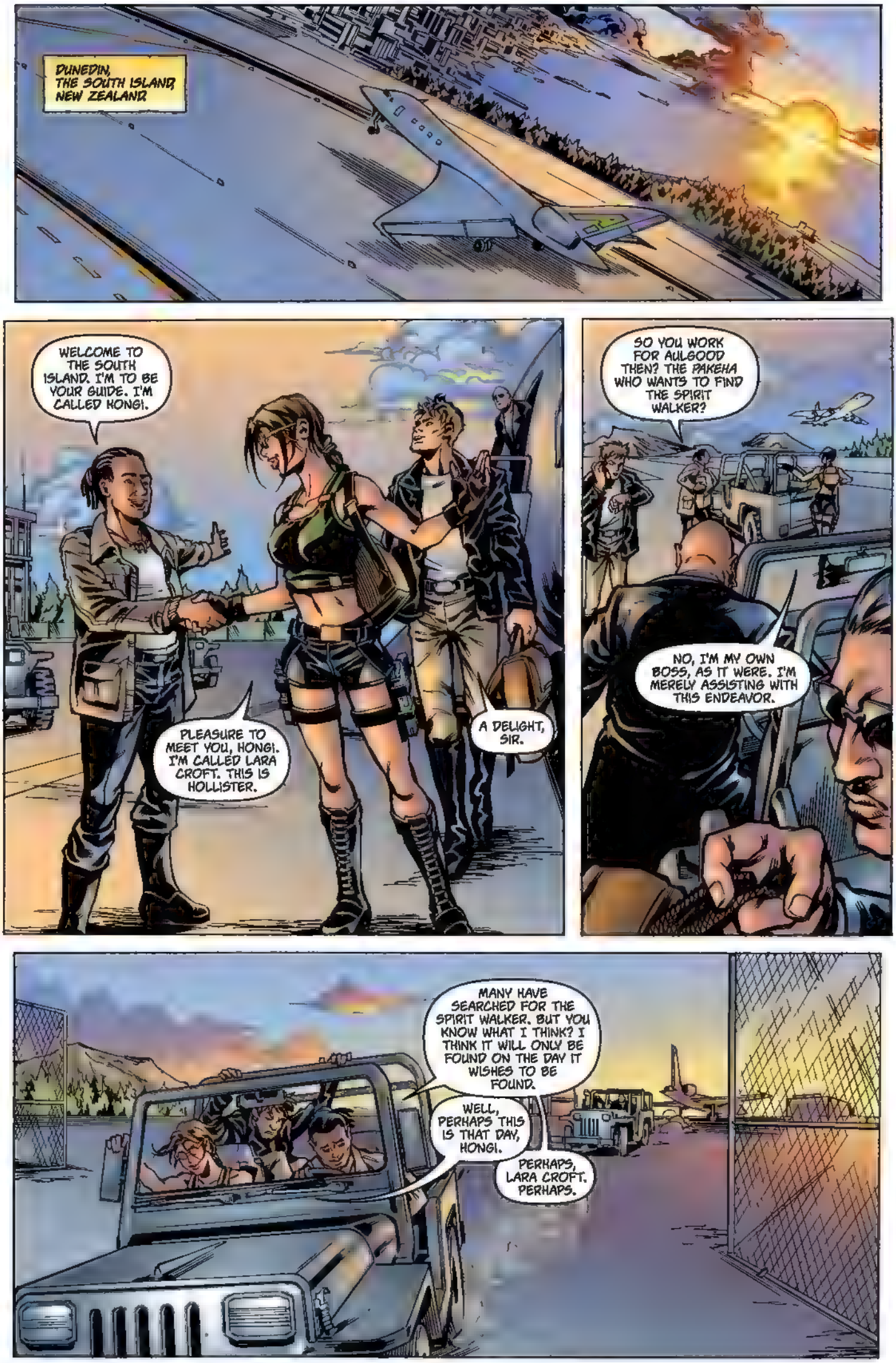
WHEN THEY CAUGHT UP WITH CARDIFF, SWEETMAN AND THE MUTINEERS DID THEIR BEST TO CONVINCE THE CAPTAIN TO SURRENDER THE SPIRIT WALKER. BUT CAPTAIN CARDIFF REMAINED DEFIANT...

...TO THE END.

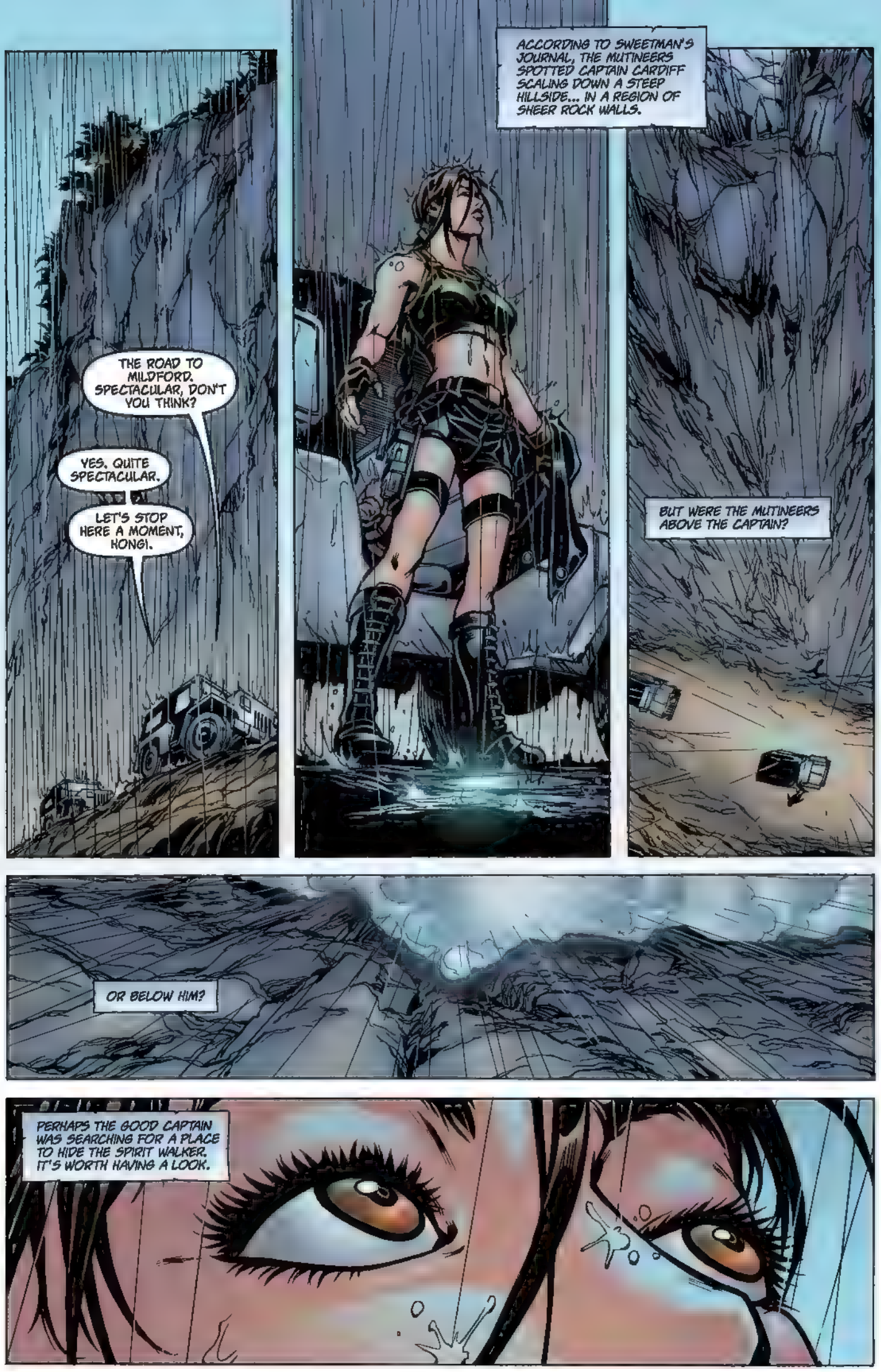
THE MUTINEERS CONTINUED SEARCHING FOR THE SPIRIT WALKER FOR A TIME, BUT THEY SOON BEGAN FIGHTING AMONGST THEMSELVES AND SPLIT UP INTO FACTIONS.

EVENTUALLY, THE BRITISH NAVY TRACKED THEM ALL DOWN.

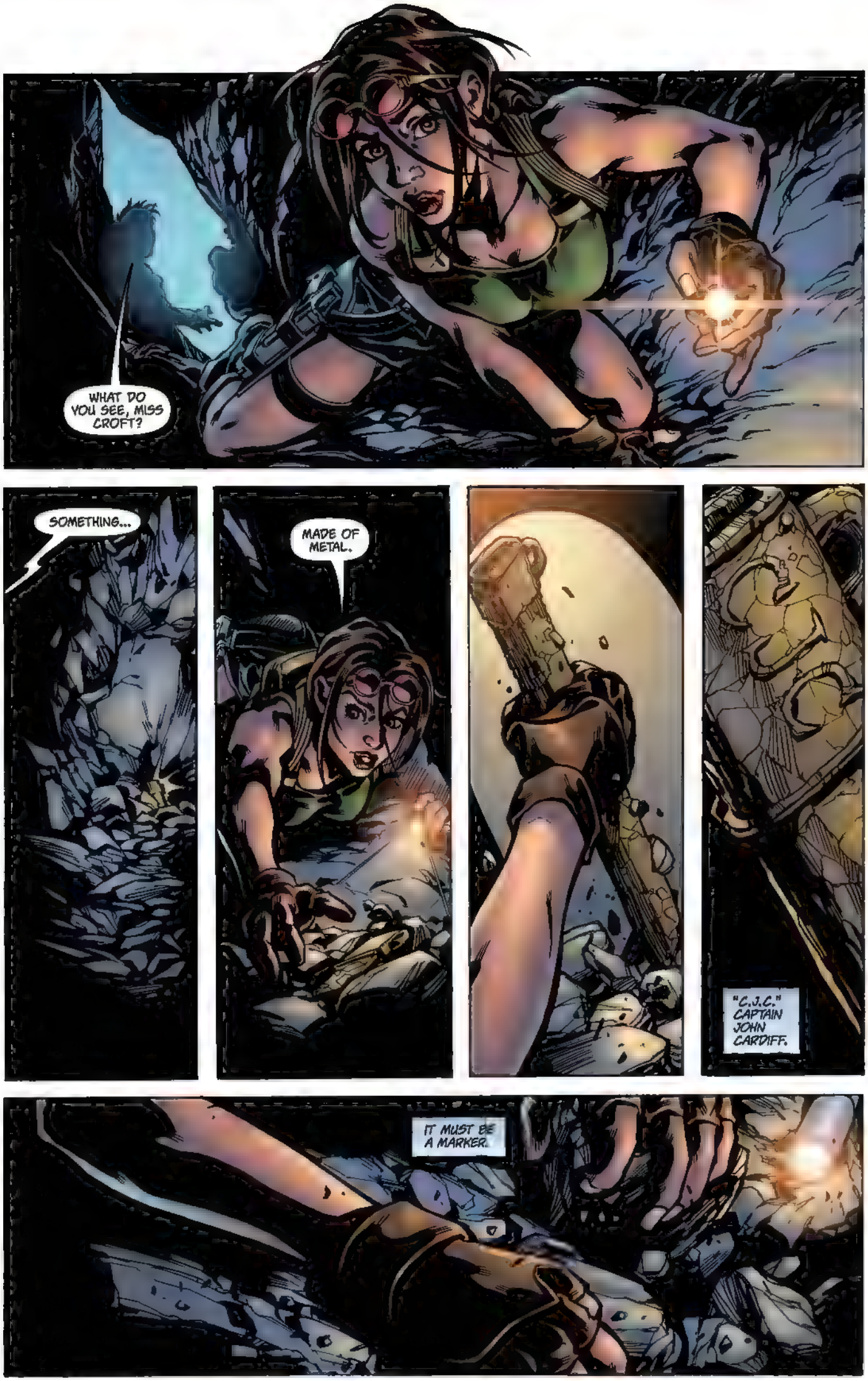
IF THERE INDEED WAS AN ABORIGINE CURSE PLACED ON THE CREW OF THE H.M.S. GRIFFIN, IT SEEMED TO DO THE TRICK.


DUNEDIN, THE SOUTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND
WELCOME TO THE SOUTH ISLAND. I'M TO BE YOUR GUIDE. I'M CALLED HONGI.
PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, HONGI. I'M CALLED LARA CROFT. THIS IS HOLLISTER.
A DELIGHT, SIR.
SO YOU WORK FOR AULGOOD THEN? THE PAKEHA WHO WANTS TO FIND THE SPIRIT WALKER?
NO, I'M MY OWN BOSS, AS IT WERE. I'M MERELY ASSISTING WITH THIS ENDEAVOR.
MANY HAVE SEARCHED FOR THE SPIRIT WALKER. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK? I THINK IT WILL ONLY BE FOUND ON THE DAY IT WISHES TO BE FOUND.
WELL, PERHAPS THIS IS THAT DAY, HONGI.
PERHAPS, LARA CROFT. PERHAPS.

MY PEOPLE, THE MAORI, CAME TO THIS LAND IN THE GREAT FLEET OVER A THOUSAND YEARS AGO. WE CALLED NEW ZEALAND, AOTEAROA, WHICH MEANS "THE LONG WHITE CLOUD."
AND THEN CAME THE INTREPID CAPTAIN JAMES COOK IN 1769.
YES, THE FIRST PAKEHA, PALE-SKIN STRANGER, TO SET FOOT IN THESE ISLANDS. AND THE FIRST TO SPILL BLOOD OF THE MAORI.
BUT NOT THE LAST.
VROOOM!
VRMM!


THE ROAD TO MILDFORD. SPECTACULAR, DON'T YOU THINK?
YES. QUITE SPECTACULAR.
LET'S STOP HERE A MOMENT, KONG!.
ACCORDING TO SWEETMAN'S JOURNAL, THE MUTINEERS SPOTTED CAPTAIN CARDIFF SCALING DOWN A STEEP HILLSIDE... IN A REGION OF SHEER ROCK WALLS.
BUT WERE THE MUTINEERS ABOVE THE CAPTAIN?
OR BELOW HIM?
PERHAPS THE GOOD CAPTAIN WAS SEARCHING FOR A PLACE TO HIDE THE SPIRIT WALKER. IT'S WORTH HAVING A LOOK.

ONE QUESTION KEEPS POPPING UP IN THE BACK OF MY MIND.
WHY DIDN'T J. BRADLEY AULGOOD SIMPLY DISPATCH HOLLISTER AND HIS OPERATIVES TO TRY TO FIND THE SPIRIT WALKER?
AFTER ALL, THE JOURNAL WAS IN HIS POSSESSION. AULGOOD MUST HAVE KNOWN THE CLUES TO FINDING THE SPIRIT WALKER COULD BE FOUND IN ITS HAND-WRITTEN TEXT.
SO WHY DID HE NEED ME TO GO ON THIS JOURNEY?
UNLESS HE SOMEHOW KNEW I WAS TO BE THE ONE TO FIND THE SPIRIT WALKER.
BUT HOW COULD HE KNOW?


WHAT DO YOU SEE, MISS CROFT?
SOMETHING...
MADE OF METAL.
"C.J.C." CAPTAIN JOHN CARDIFF.
IT MUST BE A MARKER.

I GUESS THIS WAS THE DAY THE SPIRIT WALKER WISHED TO BE FOUND.
THE SPIRIT WALKER CALLED TO YOU, LARA CROFT!
WELL DONE! SIMPLY MARVELOUS!
I'LL TAKE THE SPIRIT WALKER, IF YOU DON'T MIND.
I BELIEVE I'LL HOLD ONTO IT FOR THE TIME BEING, HOLLISTER.
I'M AFRAID I MUST INSIST.
HONGI, LOOK OUT!

BLAAM!
BLAAM!
BOAMM!

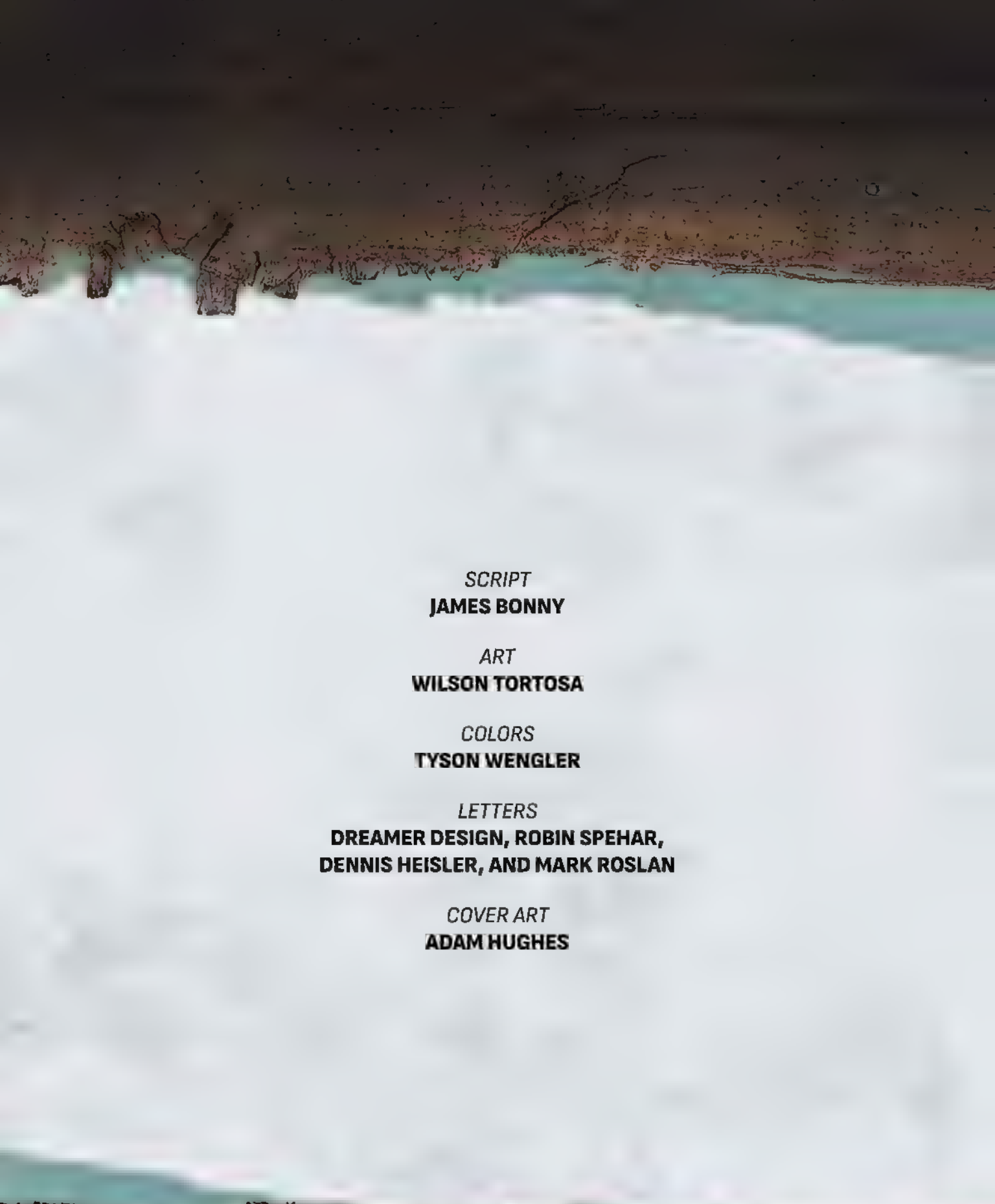
LEAVE HER ALONE, PAKEHA!
HONGI, NO!
BLAM!!!
WHAAP!
BWOFF!

RRRBBLLPBLL!
CRUNCH!
CRNCHH!
SHOULD WE DIG HER OUT?
THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT.

WE'VE GOT A SCHEDULE TO KEEP.
UHMMPH...

I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE LIKE MY FATHER. HE NEVER TRUSTED AULGOOD.
NOW AN INNOCENT YOUNG MAN IS DEAD.
AULGOOD IS GOING TO PAY FOR THIS.
THINGS COULDN'T HAVE GONE ANY BETTER, MR. AULGOOD.
WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU IN SYDNEY, SIR. WITH THE SPIRIT WALKER.
VERY GOOD, MR. HOLLISTER. VERY GOOD INDEED.
I HAVE A LITTLE SURPRISE FOR YOU, JASON.
PACK YOUR BAGS, LAD. WE'RE OFF TO AUSTRALIA.
AWESOME!
TO BE CONTINUED...

Geraldton
Perth
NEW
SOUTH
WALES
VICTORIA
AROUND
the
WORLD



SCRIPT
JAMES BONNY

ART
WILSON TORTOSA

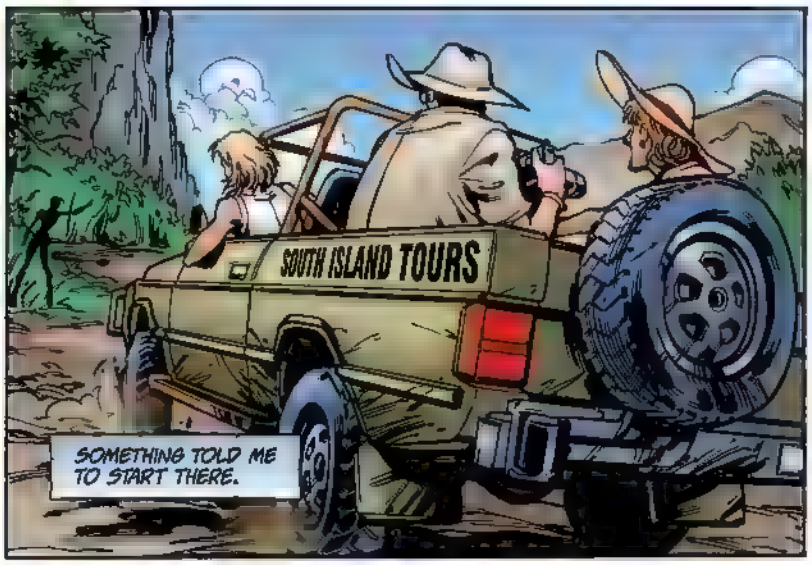
COLORS
TYSON WENGLER

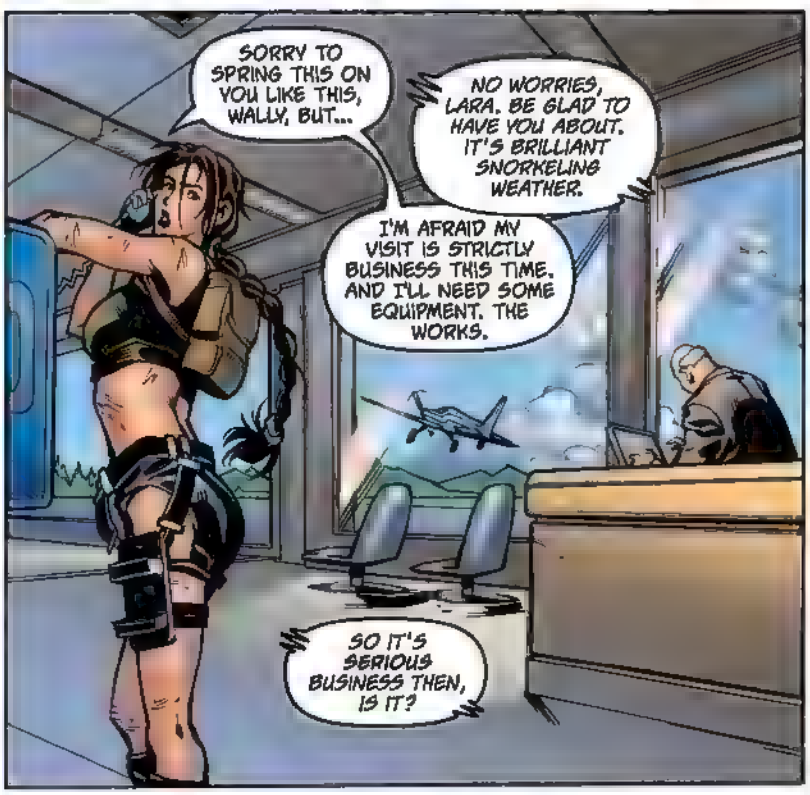
LETTERS
DREAMER DESIGN, ROBIN SPEHAR,
DENNIS HEISLER, AND MARK ROSLAN

COVER ART
ADAM HUGHES

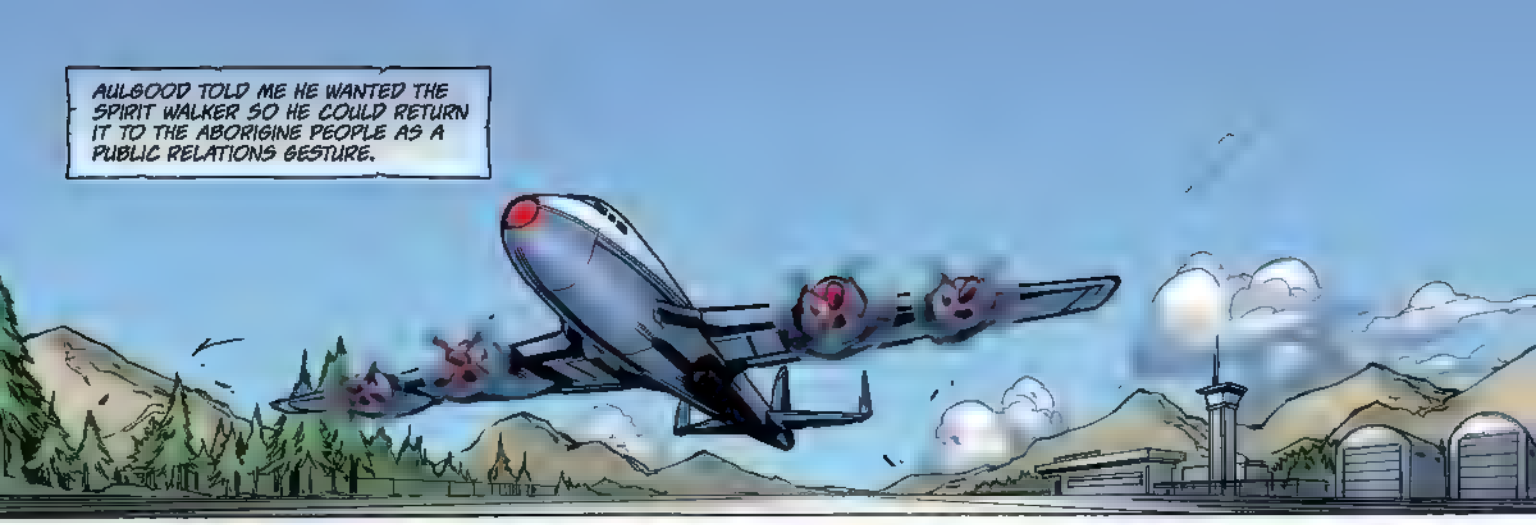
THE SPIRIT WALKER. AN ANCIENT, MYSTICAL ABORIGINE CHARM, STOLEN BY A BRITISH NAVAL CAPTAIN IN 1793. IT WAS HIDDEN SOMEWHERE ON THE SOUTH ISLAND OF NEW ZEALAND...
UNTIL I FOUND IT.
I WAS SENT AFTER THE SPIRIT WALKER BY J. BRADLEY AULGOOD, ONE OF THE RICHEST MEN ON EARTH, WHO ONCE HAD BUSINESS DEALINGS WITH MY LATE FATHER.
AS SOON AS I DISCOVERED THE SPIRIT WALKER, AULGOOD'S MEN TURNED ON ME.
I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO SURVIVE.
THE SAME WAS NOT TRUE FOR OUR NATIVE GUIDE.
MR. AULGOOD NOW HAD A GREAT DEAL TO ANSWER FOR.

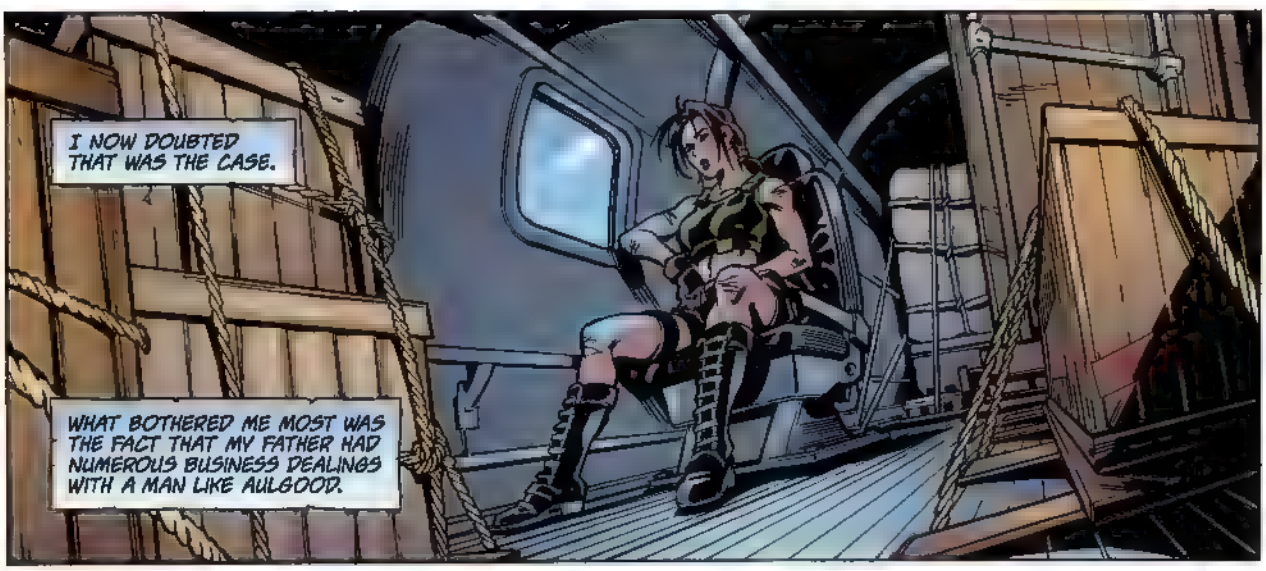
THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT WALKER IS TIED TO AUSTRALIA. AND AULGOOD INDUSTRIES HAS CORPORATE OFFICES IN SYDNEY.

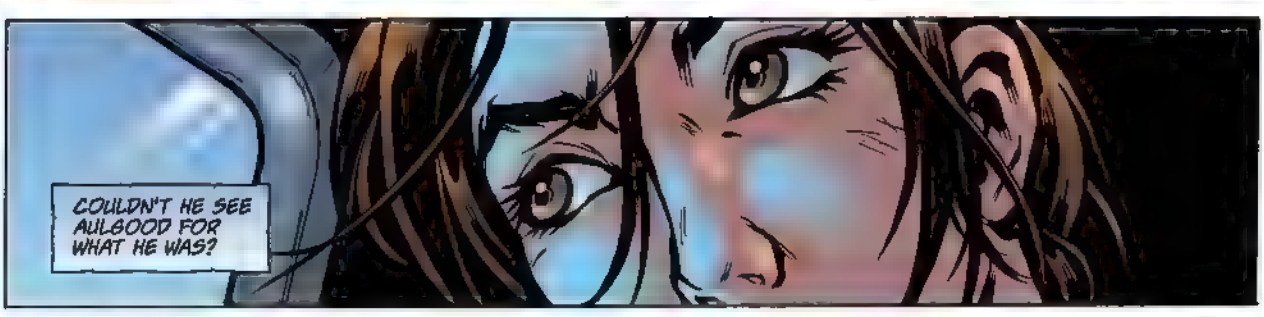

SOUTH ISLAND TOURS
SOMETHING TOLD ME TO START THERE.


SORRY TO SPRING THIS ON YOU LIKE THIS, WALLY, BUT...
NO WORRIES, LARA. BE GLAD TO HAVE YOU ABOUT. IT'S BRILLIANT SNORKELING WEATHER.
I'M AFRAID MY VISIT IS STRICTLY BUSINESS THIS TIME. AND I'LL NEED SOME EQUIPMENT. THE WORKS.
SO IT'S SERIOUS BUSINESS THEN, IS IT?

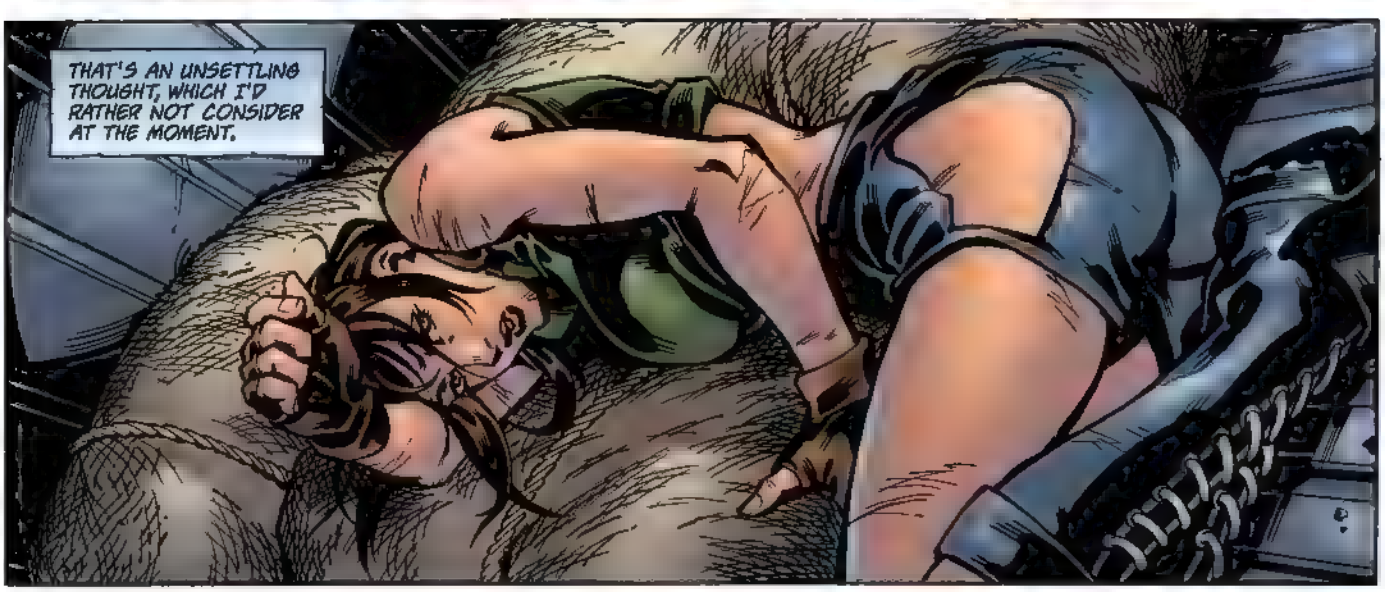
SORRY, MISS. SEEMS THE ONLY THING TAKING OFF FOR SYDNEY IS A CARGO PLANE.
A CARGO PLANE, YOU SAY?


AULGOOD TOLD ME HE WANTED THE SPIRIT WALKER SO HE COULD RETURN IT TO THE ABORIGINE PEOPLE AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS GESTURE.


I NOW DOUBTED THAT WAS THE CASE.
WHAT BOTHERED ME MOST WAS THE FACT THAT MY FATHER HAD NUMEROUS BUSINESS DEALINGS WITH A MAN LIKE AULGOOD.


COULDN'T HE SEE AULGOOD FOR WHAT HE WAS?

OR PERHAPS MY FATHER SIMPLY DIDN'T CARE.


THAT'S AN UNSETTLING THOUGHT, WHICH I'D RATHER NOT CONSIDER AT THE MOMENT.

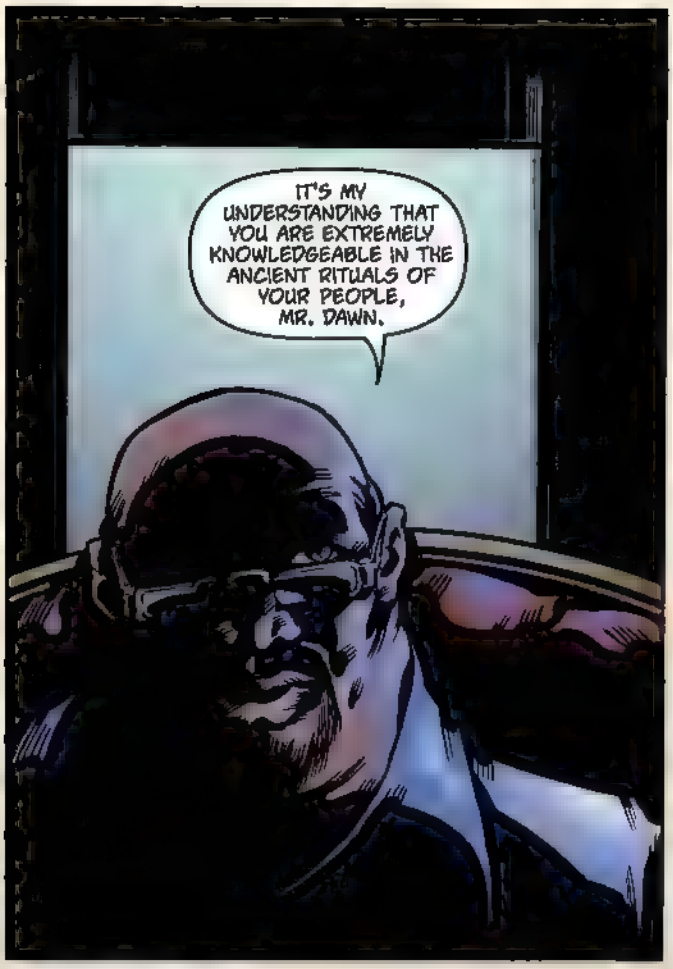
HOW I LOVE TO TRAVEL.
THIS IS TOTALLY AWESOME, UNCLE BRAD. THANKS FOR BRINGING ME ALONG.
MY PLEASURE, JASON. MY PLEASURE INDEED.
Rolling Stone
U2
IT'S IMPORTANT FOR A YOUNG MAN TO SEE THE WORLD. TO EXPERIENCE LIFE.
I ENVY YOU YOUR YOUTH, MY LAD.

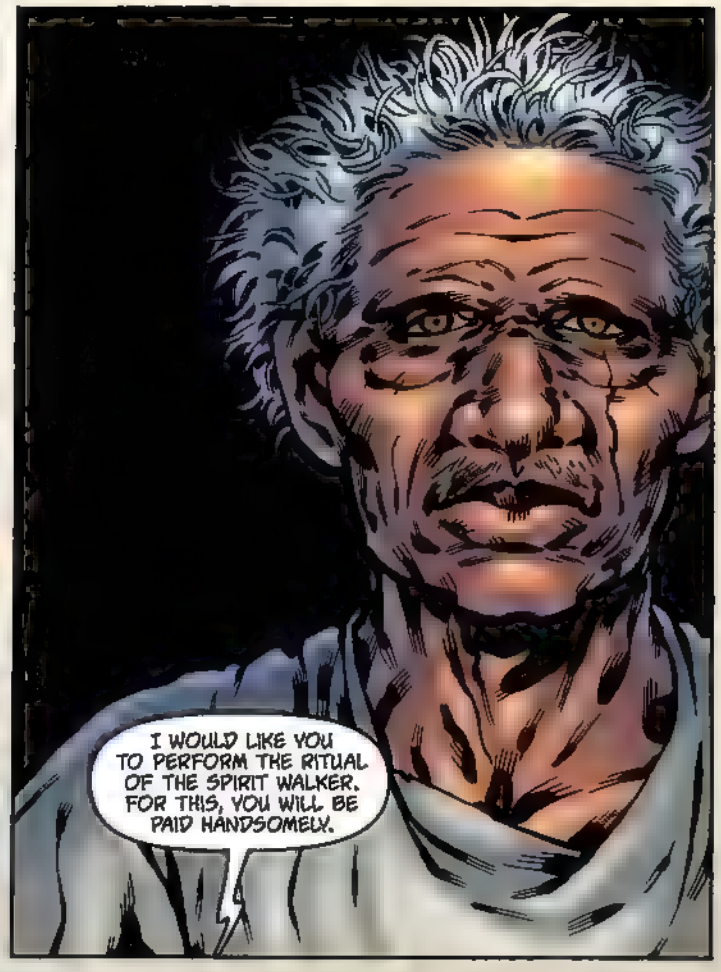
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.
I MET WALLY MACALISTER ON MY FIRST TRIP TO AUSTRALIA WHEN I WAS BARELY TWENTY. SINCE THEN, HE'S BECOME SOMETHING OF A BIG BROTHER TO ME.
TOGETHER, WE'VE EXPLORED THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, TRAIPSED THROUGH THE OUTBACK, AND CLIMBED RED ROCK. BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I WOULD BE LEADING HIM INTO REAL DANGER.
WELCOME BACK, SHEILA. BEEN TOO LONG.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN PUT THROUGH THE WRINGER, EH?
IT'S ONLY A SCRAPE. AULGOOD'S MEN MEANT TO KILL ME. BUT I GOT LUCKY.
YOU'RE GONNA NEED MORE THAN LUCK TO GO UP AGAINST A BLOKE AS POWERFUL AS AULGOOD.
RIGHT. I TRUST YOU BROUGHT THE GUNS?
THEY'RE OUT IN THE JEEP.
I DID SOME NOSING AROUND. THERE'S AN "AULGOOD INDUSTRIES" CORPORATE JET FLYING IN FROM HAWAII SCHEDULED TO LAND IN ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES.
QANTAS
WELL, LET'S SEE WHO GETS OFF THAT JET THEN, SHALL WE?

I TRUST YOU HAD A PLEASANT FLIGHT, MR. AULGOOD.
VERY PLEASANT, HOLLISTER. ARE WE ON SCHEDULE?
INDEED WE ARE.
THE FINAL ELEMENT ARRIVED AT THE FACILITY AN HOUR AGO.
VERY GOOD. I'D SAY YOU'VE EARNED YOURSELF A RAISE, HOLLISER.
YOU'RE TOO GENEROUS, MR. AULGOOD.
WHY WOULD AULGOOD BRING HIS NEPHEW ALONG, I WONDER?
HE SEEMS LIKE SUCH AN INNOCENT KID.
SOMETIMES FIRST IMPRESSIONS CAN BE MISLEADING. REMEMBER WHEN WE FIRST MET IN THAT PUB IN ADELAIDE?
PLEASE, DON'T REMIND ME.

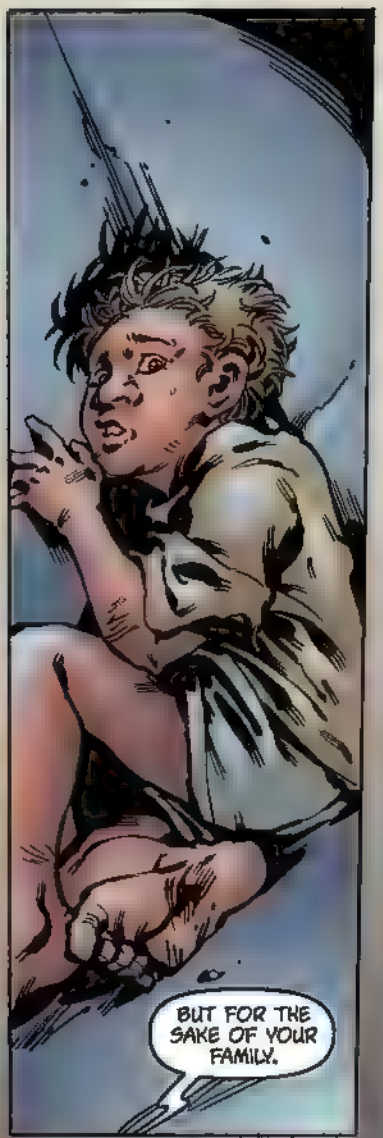
SO WHAT'S THE PLAN THEN, MATE? TO GET THE SPIRIT WALKER BACK?
NO, THE PLAN IS TO FIND OUT WHAT AULGOOD INTENDS TO DO WITH THE SPIRIT WALKER. AND THEN STOP HIM.
THAT'S A BIT LIKE TWEAKIN' A CROCODILE ON THE SNOUT.
IT LOOKS AS THOUGH MR. AULGOOD WANTS SOME WELL-GUARDED PRIVACY.
YOU AIN'T KIDDIN'. HOW DO YOU PROPOSE WE GET IN THERE?
WE CLIMB, WALLY OLD BOY. WE CLIMB.

I MUST ATTEND TO A SPOT OF BUSINESS, JASON. IT SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG. I WONDER IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND WAITING HERE WITH MR. GEARING.
NO PROBLEM, UNCLE BRAD.
SUCH A FINE LAD.
THE FINAL ELEMENT...
...IS RIGHT IN HERE.
WHISS!
MR. AULGOOD, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE, MR. JOHN DAWN.


IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU ARE EXTREMELY KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE ANCIENT RITUALS OF YOUR PEOPLE, MR. DAWN.

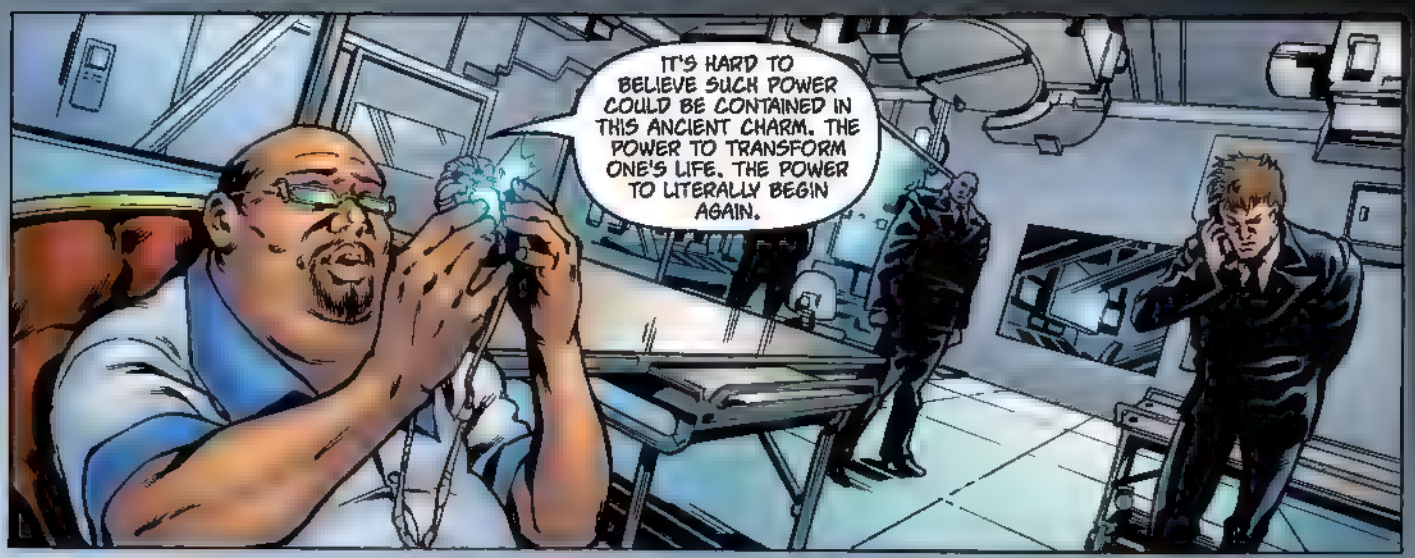

I WOULD LIKE YOU TO PERFORM THE RITUAL OF THE SPIRIT WALKER. FOR THIS, YOU WILL BE PAID HANDSOMELY.

I DO HOPE YOU ACCEPT MY OFFER, MR. DAWN. NOT ONLY FOR YOUR SAKE...

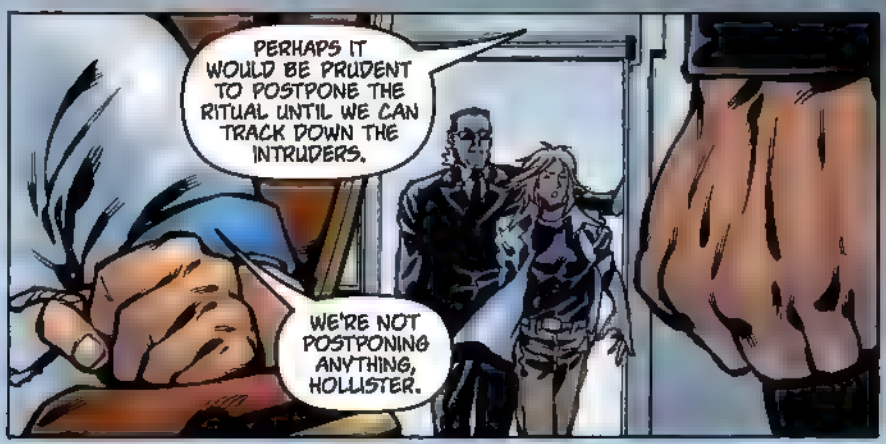

BUT FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR FAMILY.

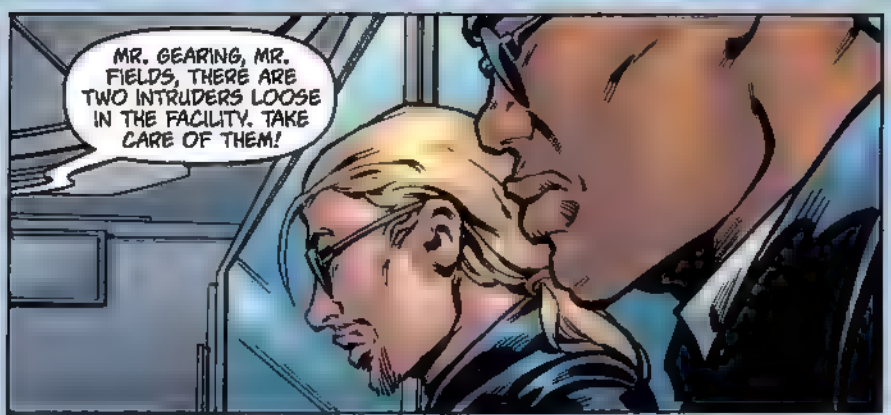
A MAN WITH AULGOOD'S WEALTH CAN AFFORD ANYTHING. AND GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING.
THERE ARE SOME THINGS WHICH MONEY CAN'T BUY.
POSSIBLY THAT'S WHERE THE SPIRIT WALKER COMES IN.
LOOKS PRETTY DESERTED.
AS I SAID, AULGOOD MUST WANT HIS PRIVACY.
LADIES FIRST.
EVER THE GENTLEMAN.
5:0
10:54
BREAK IN SECTOR FIVE...

FREEZE!
WHAPP!
BOOMPH!
BWOFF!
NICE TO SEE YOU IN ACTION, LARA. IT'S A SIGHT TO BEHOLD.
ARE YOU COMING ALONG, WALLY? OR ARE YOU JUST GOING TO HANG AROUND HERE?
FUNNY.


IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE SUCH POWER COULD BE CONTAINED IN THIS ANCIENT CHARM. THE POWER TO TRANSFORM ONE'S LIFE. THE POWER TO LITERALLY BEGIN AGAIN.

IT SEEMS THERE'S BEEN A BREAK-IN, MR. AULGOOD. A MAN AND A WOMAN. JUDGING BY THE DESCRIPTION... IT MIGHT BE LARA CROFT.
AND HOW COULD THAT BE, HOLLISTER, WHEN LARA CROFT IS DEAD IN NEW ZEALAND?
I'M AFRAID THAT MAY NOT BE THE CASE AFTER ALL, SIR.


PERHAPS IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO POSTPONE THE RITUAL UNTIL WE CAN TRACK DOWN THE INTRUDERS.
WE'RE NOT POSTPONING ANYTHING, HOLLISTER.


MR. GEARING, MR. FIELDS, THERE ARE TWO INTRUDERS LOOSE IN THE FACILITY. TAKE CARE OF THEM!

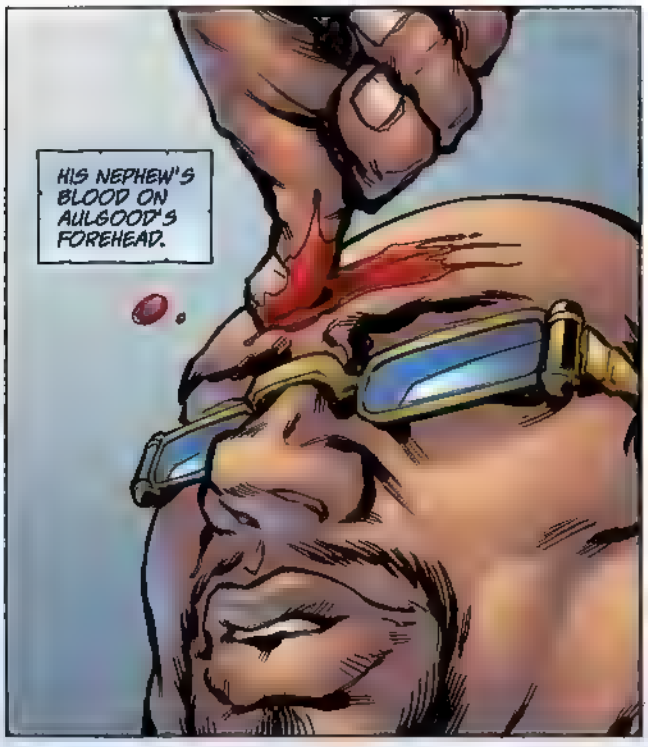
WALLY, LOOK OUT!

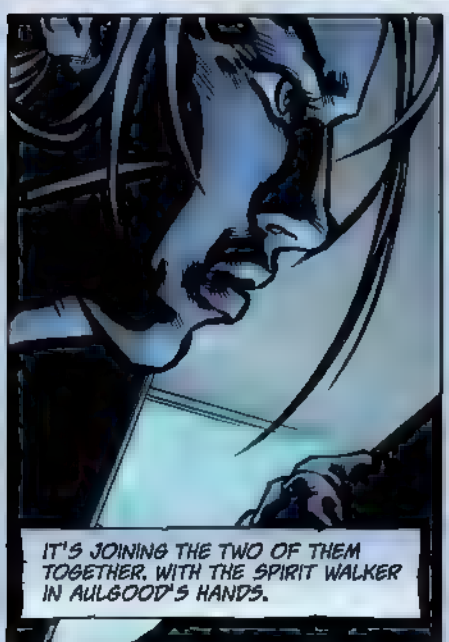
BLAAM!
BLAAAM!
BLAAAAM!
CHUNNK!
VZING!
ZING!
ZINNG!
THUNNK!
PHUNKSH!

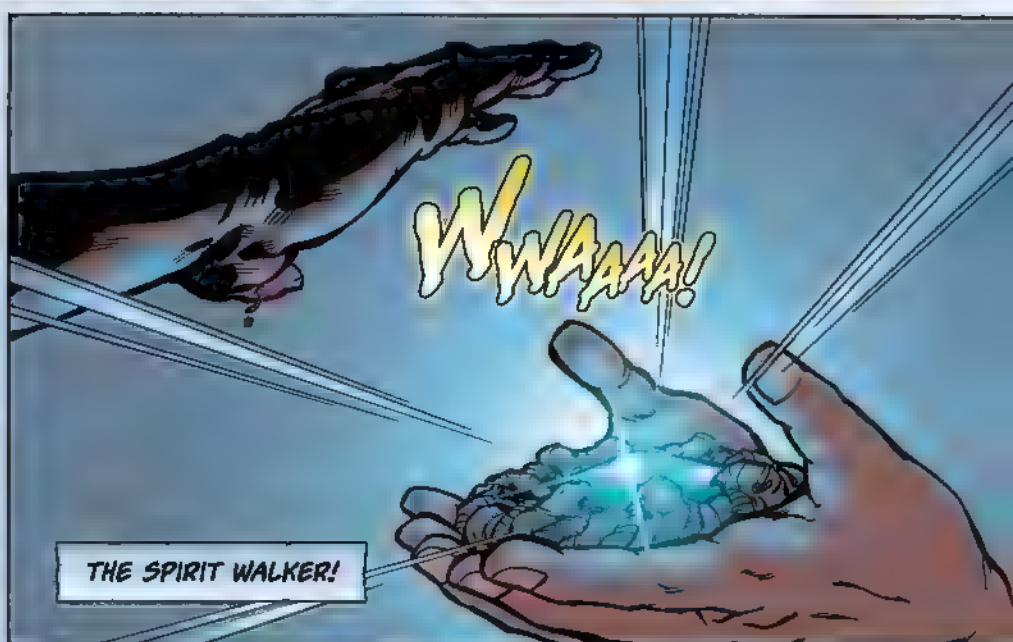
CHUNKSH!
BOAM!
BOOAM!
PHUNKSH!
WALLY...
NO WORRIES, LARA DEAR. I'VE HAD WORSE MOSQUITO BITES.
AFRAID I'M LIABLE TO SLOW YOU DOWN A BIT.
YOU STAY HERE, WALLY. I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU.

UNCLE BRAD, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO HERE.
IT'S A SIMPLE CEREMONIAL RITUAL, THOUGH QUITE IMPORTANT TO THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TO AUSTRALIA.
YOU'LL BE DOING ME A TREMENDOUS FAVOR, JASON. AND THEM AS WELL.
SO HOW COME THEY DON'T LOOK SO ENTHUSED?
YOU KNOW WHAT, I'M OUTTA HERE...
THIS DIDN'T HAVE TO BE UNPLEASANT.
HOLLISTER.
HEY!
LET THIS BE THE DAY.
THE DAY I BEGIN AGAIN.

AULGOOD'S BLOOD ON HIS NEPHEW'S FOREHEAD.


HIS NEPHEW'S BLOOD ON AULGOOD'S FOREHEAD.


IT'S JOINING THE TWO OF THEM TOGETHER. WITH THE SPIRIT WALKER IN AULGOOD'S HANDS.


WWAAAA!
THE SPIRIT WALKER!

WWWAAAAA!

WHAT ARE YOU...?
WWAAAA!

AAAAAA!
WHAT...?
YOU CAN LET GO OF ME NOW, MR. BARTLETT.
THAT'S... ME!
WRONG, MY LAD. IT'S ME.
AULGOOD'S NEPHEW IS HIS ONLY LIVING RELATIVE. UPON AULGOOD'S DEATH, JASON AULGOOD WILL INHERIT HIS UNCLE'S ENTIRE CORPORATE EMPIRE.
OR, RATHER, THE PERSON INSIDE HIS BODY WILL.

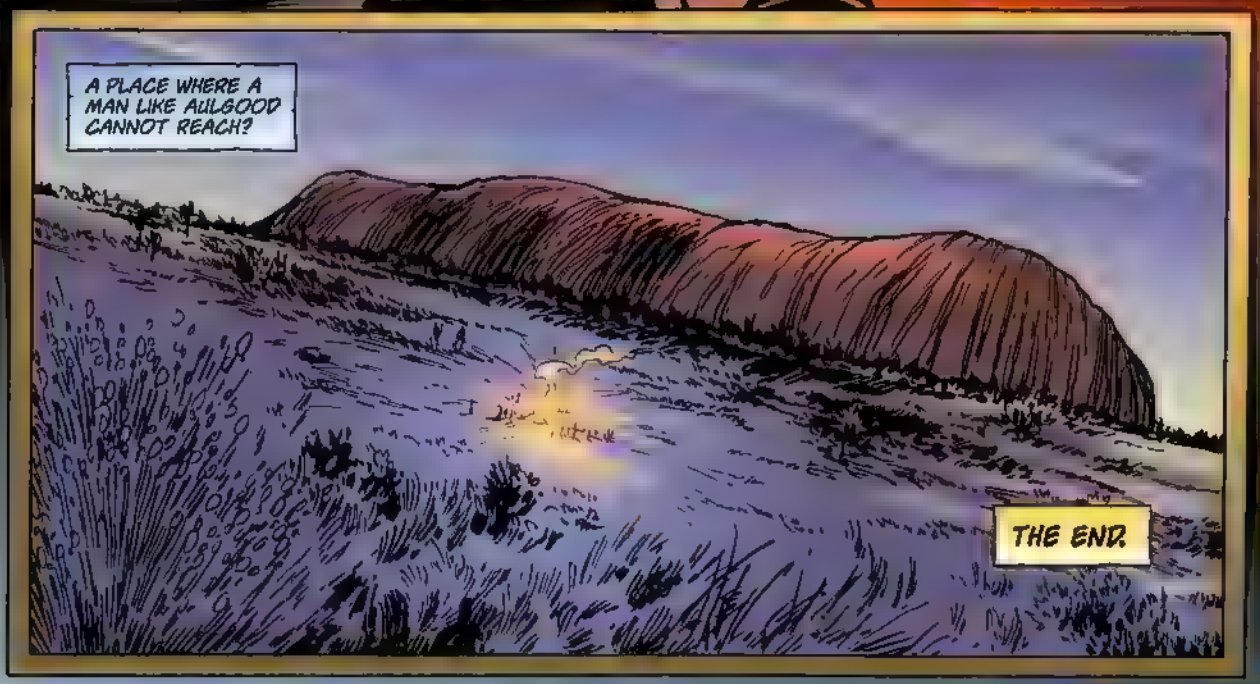
TO WALK AGAIN. TO HAVE SUCH A STRONG, YOUNG BODY.
IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM.
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING. IT'S GOTTA BE A NIGHTMARE.
WITH THIS BODY, I'LL LIVE FAR INTO THIS CENTURY. ENOUGH TIME TO RESHAPE THE FUTURE. AND I OWE IT ALL TO YOU, MY NEPHEW.
HOLLISTER.
WHAT ARE YOU...?
IT WILL BE QUICK, AND RELATIVELY PAINLESS.
J. BRADLEY AULGOOD WILL SUFFER A FATAL HEART ATTACK...
AND YOUNG JASON AULGOOD WILL TAKE OVER WHERE HIS UNCLE LEFT OFF. RESHAPING THE FUTURE...

KA-VAGGHH!

PHUNKGH!
BLAAAM!
BLAAAM!
THUNNK!
NO!
BLAAAM!
TCHINK!
AAAAIEE!
I BELIEVE THIS BELONGS TO YOU.

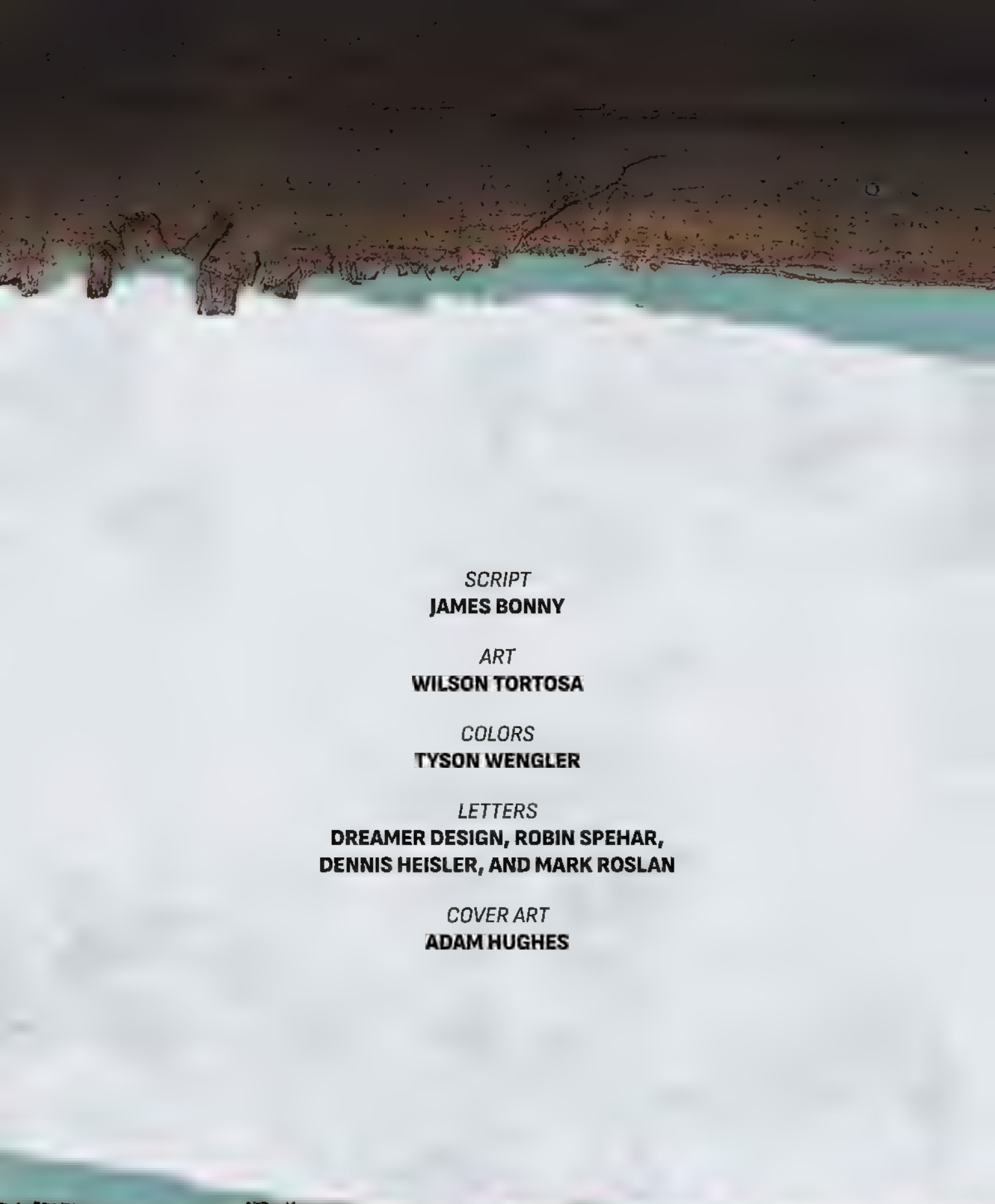
WWWAAAAA!
WWWAAAAA!
NOOO!
WWWAAAAA!
NOOOO!
WE'LL BE LEAVING NOW, MR. AULGOOD. ALL OF US. YOUR NEPHEW INCLUDED.
IT WOULD BE BEST IF NO ONE TRIES TO STOP US.
CONGRATULATIONS. YOU'VE JUST MADE YOURSELF AN ENEMY FOR LIFE, LARA CROFT.
HOWEVER LONG THAT IS.

THANK YOU, LARA CROFT. THANK YOU FOR RETURNING THE SPIRIT WALKER TO OUR PEOPLE.
IT MUST BE PROTECTED. AULGOOD MAY ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN IT AGAIN.
WE WILL PUT IT IN A PLACE WHERE A MAN LIKE AULGOOD CAN NEVER REACH IT.



NEXT ISSUE:
TOWER OF SOULS!

TOWER OF SOULS PART 1
Take a Trip to Scenic
IRELAND
PACK APPROPRIATELY



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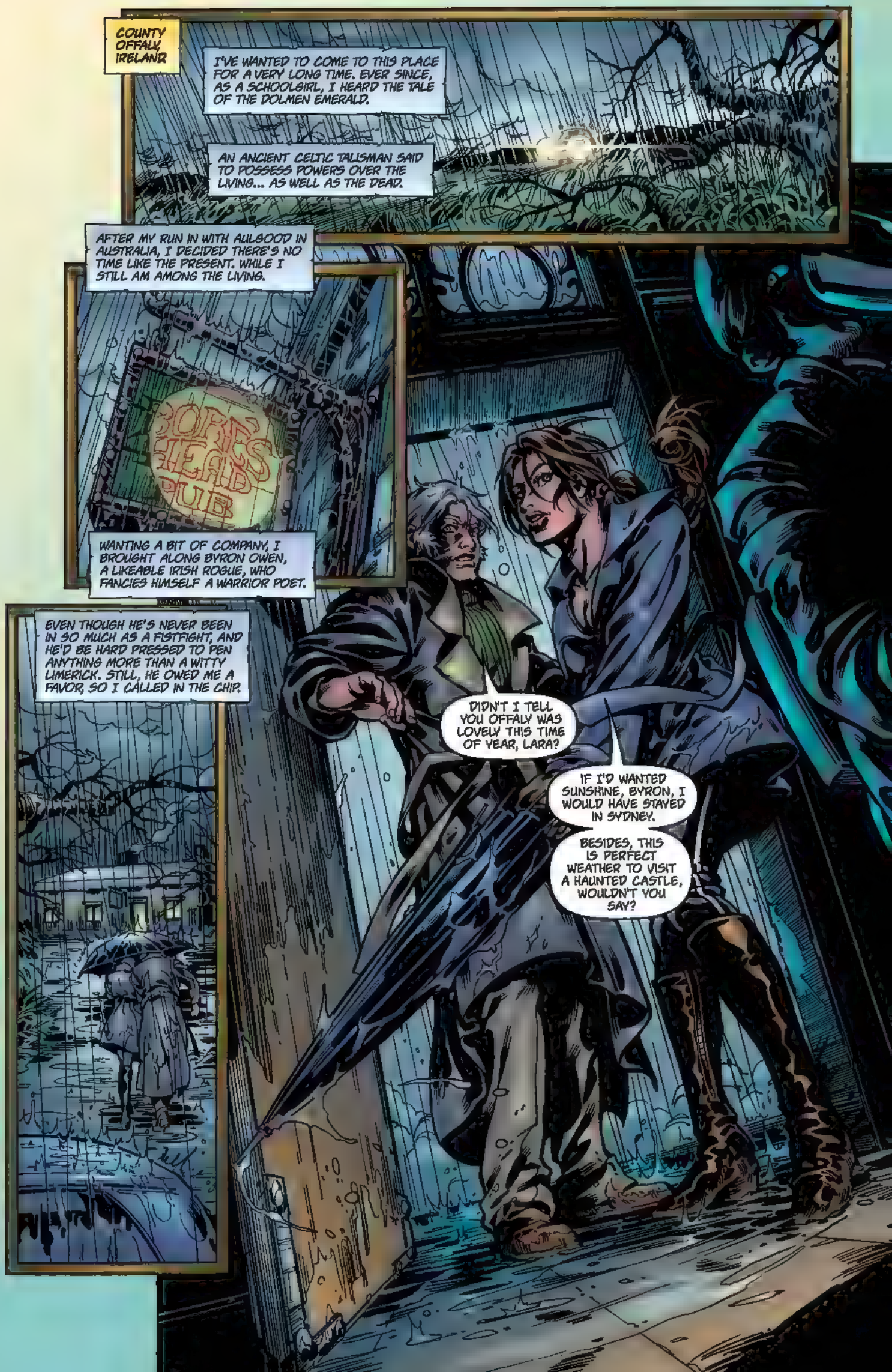

COUNTY OFFALY, IRELAND
I'VE WANTED TO COME TO THIS PLACE FOR A VERY LONG TIME. EVER SINCE, AS A SCHOOLGIRL, I HEARD THE TALE OF THE DOLMEN EMERALD.
AN ANCIENT CELTIC TALISMAN SAID TO POSSESS POWERS OVER THE LIVING... AS WELL AS THE DEAD.
AFTER MY RUN IN WITH AULGOOD IN AUSTRALIA, I DECIDED THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT. WHILE I STILL AM AMONG THE LIVING.
BORE'S HEAD PUB
WANTING A BIT OF COMPANY, I BROUGHT ALONG BYRON OWEN, A LIKEABLE IRISH ROGUE, WHO FANCIES HIMSELF A WARRIOR POET.
EVEN THOUGH HE'S NEVER BEEN IN SO MUCH AS A FISTFIGHT, AND HE'D BE HARD PRESSED TO PEN ANYTHING MORE THAN A WITTY LIMERICK. STILL, HE OWED ME A FAVOR, SO I CALLED IN THE CHIP.
DIDN'T I TELL YOU OFFALY WAS LOVELY THIS TIME OF YEAR, LARA?
IF I'D WANTED SUNSHINE, BYRON, I WOULD HAVE STAYED IN SYDNEY.
BESIDES, THIS IS PERFECT WEATHER TO VISIT A HAUNTED CASTLE, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?

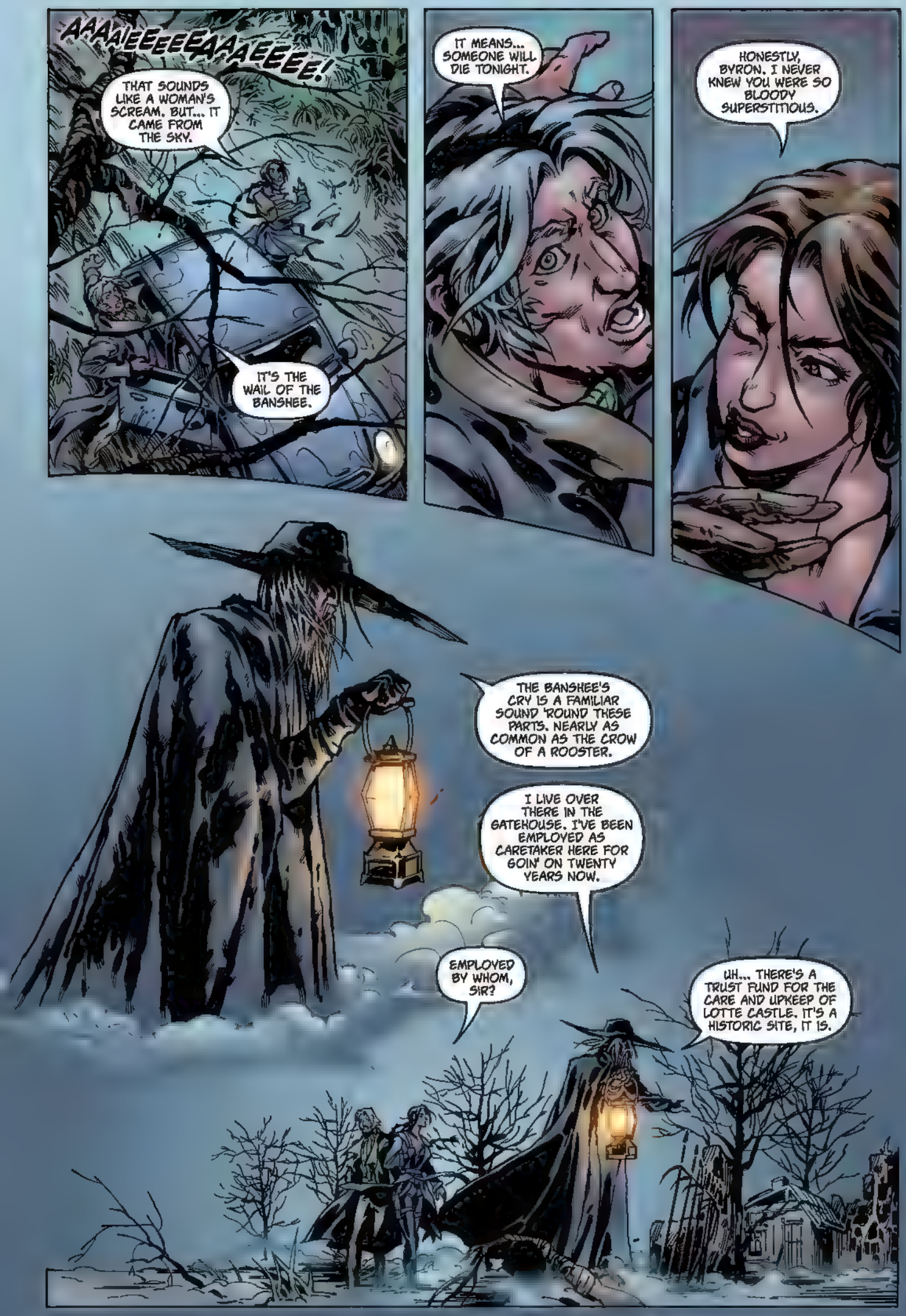
IT'S BAD LUCK TO BE MAKING JOKES. IF YOU'VE HEARD WHAT I'VE HEARD ABOUT LOTTE CASTLE...
WHAT I'VE HEARD TELL IS THAT THE DOLMEN EMERALD MIGHT BE HIDDEN SOMEWHERE INSIDE. GHOST STORIES DON'T REALLY INTEREST ME ALL THAT MUCH.
STILL, I HOPE YOU WON'T OBJECT IF I HAVE A FEW PINTS OF LIQUID COURAGE BEFORE WE VENTURE FORTH.
WOULD IT MATTER IF I DID OBJECT?
NOT A BIT.
HERE NOW. DID I HEAR YOU MENTION LOTTE CASTLE?
YOU DID INDEED, MY GOOD MAN. NOW I WILL HAVE A PINT OF YOUR FINEST ALE, AND THE LADY WILL BE HAVING...
YOU DON'T WANT TO BE GOING ANYWHERE NEAR LOTTE CASTLE. NOT IF YOU'RE IN YOUR RIGHT MIND.
OH REALLY? AND WHY IS THAT?
BECAUSE IT'S A PLACE OF PURE EVIL, LASS.
TAKE MY ADVICE. LEAVE HERE. NOW.
BRRR-BOOMMM!

THAT'S DUNLEAVY. HE'S THE CARETAKER OF LOTTE CASTLE.
MR. DUNLEAVY, GOOD OF YOU TO COME OUT ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS. I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO LARA CROFT. SHE'S THE ONE I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT.
THE ADVENTURE SEEKER, EH?
WON'T YOU JOIN US, MR. DUNLEAVY?
SO YOU'RE WANTING TO PAY A VISIT TO LOTTE CASTLE, ARE YA?
YES, IF IT'S NOT TOO MUCH OF AN IMPOSITION.
WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO THERE?
I'M SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING. THE DOLMEN EMERALD. EVER HEARD OF IT?
CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE.
I'VE BEEN THROUGH EVERY INCH OF THAT OLD CASTLE. THERE'S NOTHING THERE OF VALUE. NOT ANYMORE.
WELL THEN, YOU WOULDN'T MIND IF WE HAD A LOOK AROUND, WOULD YOU, MR. DUNLEAVY?
THAT'S LOTTE CASTLE YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, GIRL! IF YOU WANT TO GO POKIN' AROUND IN THERE, THEN YOU'D BEST KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING INTO. THOSE ANCIENT STONE WALLS HAVE SEEN MORE THAN THEIR SHARE OF BLOODSHED AND MISERY.
AND I'M SURE THEY'RE YEARNING TO SEE MORE.

LOTTE CASTLE IS SAID TO BE THE MOST HAUNTED CASTLE IN ALL OF IRELAND. A LEGEND NO DOUBT EARNED FROM ITS LONG AND BLOODY HISTORY.
IT BEGAN IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, WHEN LOTTE WAS A STRONGHOLD OF THE POWERFUL O'CONNOR FAMILY. UPON THE DEATH OF THE CHIEFTAIN, MULROONY O'CONNOR IN 1543, A FIERCE RIVALRY ERUPTED WITHIN THE FAMILY.
TWO BROTHERS VIED FOR POWER. ONE WAS A PRIEST. THE OTHER WAS THE CRUEL AND TREACHEROUS IAN O'CONNOR.
ONE NIGHT IN THE CASTLE'S CHAPEL, THE BROTHER PRIEST WAS SAYING MASS. AS HE WAS CHANTING THE HOLY RITES, HE WAS ATTACKED WITH A SWORD WIELDED BY IAN O'CONNOR, AND SLAUGHTERED ON THE ALTAR.
THE ROOM HAS BEEN KNOWN AS THE "BLOODY CHAPEL" EVER SINCE.
AS THE LOCAL CHIEFTAIN, IAN O'CONNOR'S REPUTATION FOR CRUELTY KNEW NO BOUNDS. PRISONERS OF CLAN WARS AND ENEMIES OF THE FAMILY MET THEIR FATE IN THE CASTLE'S DUNGEON, WHERE THEY SUFFERED UNSPEAKABLE TORMENTS.
BUT DEATH DID NOT END THEIR MISERY.
IT'S SAID THEIR TORTURED SPIRITS STILL HAUNT THE CASTLE CORRIDORS, BOUND TO LOTTE FOR ALL ETERNITY. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER, MORE FRIGHTENING PHANTASM WITHIN THE STONE WALLS OF LOTTE CASTLE.
IT'S KNOWN AS THE ELEMENTAL-- A HELLISH MANIFESTATION, BORN OF PURE EVIL AND THE DARK ENERGIES OF HUMAN SUFFERING. TO ENCOUNTER IT IS TO BE DRIVEN TO EDGE OF MADNESS.

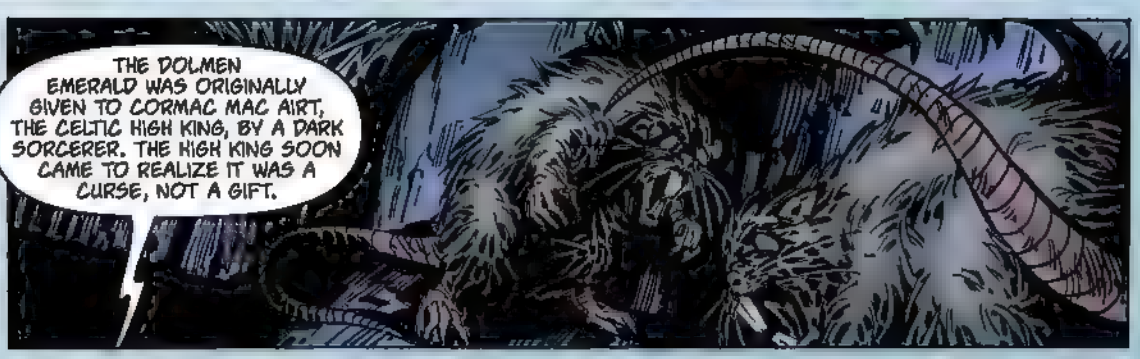
SO, LASS, D'YA STILL WANT TO BE PAYIN' A VISIT TO LOTTE CASTLE?
YES, MR. DUNLEAVY. IN FACT, I'M MORE INTRIGUED THAN EVER.
I'M TELLING YOU, THAT OLD BUGGER'S MAD AS A MARCH HARE.
VROOOOMMM!
AND HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE.
I DO HOPE YOU'RE NOT REFERRING TO ME, LOVE. I MIGHT TAKE OFFENSE.
YOU'VE GOTTA BE DAFT TO FOLLOW THAT OLD MAN INTO LOTTE CASTLE. AND I'VE GOT TO BE BLEEDIN' MENTAL FOR GOIN' ALONG WITH YOU.
YOU'RE JUST SPOOKED BY HIS GHOST STORIES.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE IN GHOSTS TO BELIEVE LOTTE CASTLE IS EVIL.
JUST HAVE A LOOK FOR YOURSELF.

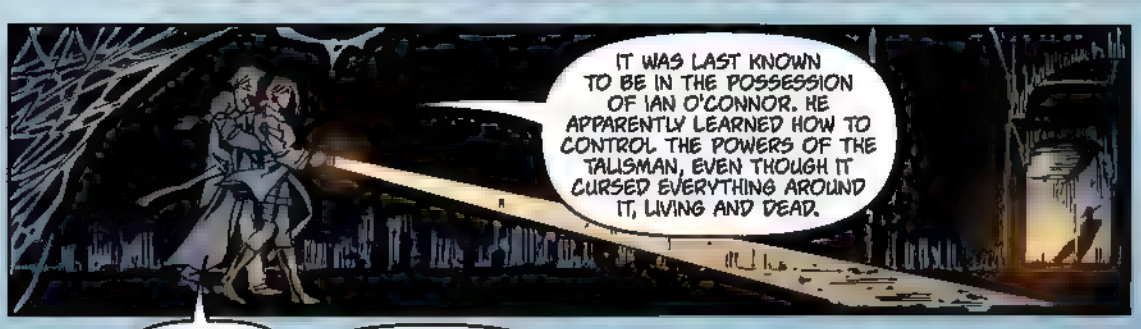
BYRON HAD A POINT. IT'S AS IF THE VERY STONES OF LOTTE CASTLE ARE PERMEATED BY EVIL— AS IF THEY ABSORBED IT OVER THE MANY YEARS OF TORTURE, TORMENT, AND BLOODSHED.
BUT THE DOLMEN EMERALD IS QUITE POSSIBLY HIDDEN SOMEWHERE INSIDE. AND I'M KEEN TO FIND IT, GHOSTS OR NO GHOSTS.


AAAAIEEEEEAAAEEEE!
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A WOMAN'S SCREAM. BUT... IT CAME FROM THE SKY.
IT'S THE WAIL OF THE BANSHEE.
IT MEANS... SOMEONE WILL DIE TONIGHT.
HONESTLY, BYRON. I NEVER KNEW YOU WERE SO BLOODY SUPERSTITIOUS.
THE BANSHEE'S CRY IS A FAMILIAR SOUND 'ROUND THESE PARTS. NEARLY AS COMMON AS THE CROW OF A ROOSTER.
I LIVE OVER THERE IN THE GATEHOUSE. I'VE BEEN EMPLOYED AS CARETAKER HERE FOR GOIN' ON TWENTY YEARS NOW.
EMPLOYED BY WHOM, SIR?
UH... THERE'S A TRUST FUND FOR THE CARE AND UPKEEP OF LOTTE CASTLE. IT'S A HISTORIC SITE, IT IS.

GRRRRR!
I USUALLY DON'T COME IN HERE AT NIGHT.
TRUTH BE TOLD, I USUALLY TRY NOT TO COME IN HERE AT ALL.
BUT I AM THE CARETAKER, AFTER ALL...
SO I SUPPOSE IT'S HIGH TIME I HAD A WEE LOOK AROUND.
JUST TO MAKE SURE ALL IS WELL IN THE CASTLE. HEH.

SO WHAT'S SO DAMN SPECIAL ABOUT THIS THING YOU'RE AFTER?
THE DOLMEN EMERALD.
WHATEVER YOU CALL IT. IS IT WORTH A BLOODY FORTUNE OR SOMETHING?
TO THE RIGHT BUYER, I'M SURE IT IS. BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I WANT TO FIND IT.


THE DOLMEN EMERALD WAS ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO CORMAC MAC AIRT, THE CELTIC HIGH KING, BY A DARK SORCERER. THE HIGH KING SOON CAME TO REALIZE IT WAS A CURSE, NOT A GIFT.


IT WAS LAST KNOWN TO BE IN THE POSSESSION OF IAN O'CONNOR. HE APPARENTLY LEARNED HOW TO CONTROL THE POWERS OF THE TALISMAN, EVEN THOUGH IT CURSED EVERYTHING AROUND IT, LIVING AND DEAD.

SO WHY DO YOU WANT THE WRETCHED THING?
BECAUSE A THING LIKE THAT NEEDS TO BE LOCKED AWAY IN THE DEEPEST VAULT, WHERE EVIL MEN CANNOT GET AT IT.
EVIL MEN? WHAT EVIL MEN?
TRUST ME, BYRON DEAR. THEY'RE OUT THERE.

AAAAAAEE
BOO-BOOM!
EEE
EEYAAA!
MR. DUNLEAVY?!
HOLY MOTHER!
WE WERE INSANE FOR COMING IN HERE, I TELL YOU!
CALM DOWN, BYRON. I'M SURE THERE'S A RATIONAL EXPLANATION...
WE'VE GOTTA GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE BEFORE WE ALL DIE!

GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, BYRON!
WHAT...
...KIND OF GAME IS HE PLAYING?
GAME? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
STAY HERE.

DUNLEAVY?
WHERE ARE YOU?
HELLO.
ARE WE PLAYING HIDE AND...
...SEEK?
CURIOUS.

LARA?!
WHAT... IS THAT HORRIBLE SMELL?
LIKE... BLOODY ROTTING FLESH.
WHA...
AAAAAA!

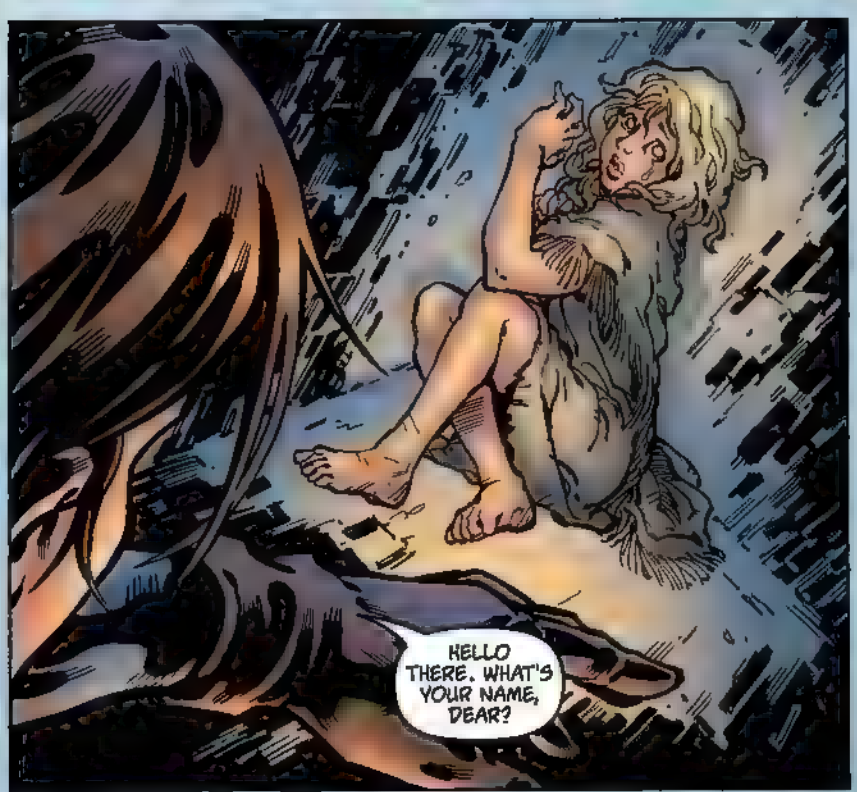
AAAAAA!
BYRON?!
BYRON? WHERE ARE YOU?
NO!
BAAM! BAAM! BAAM!
LET ME OUT!
LET ME OUT!

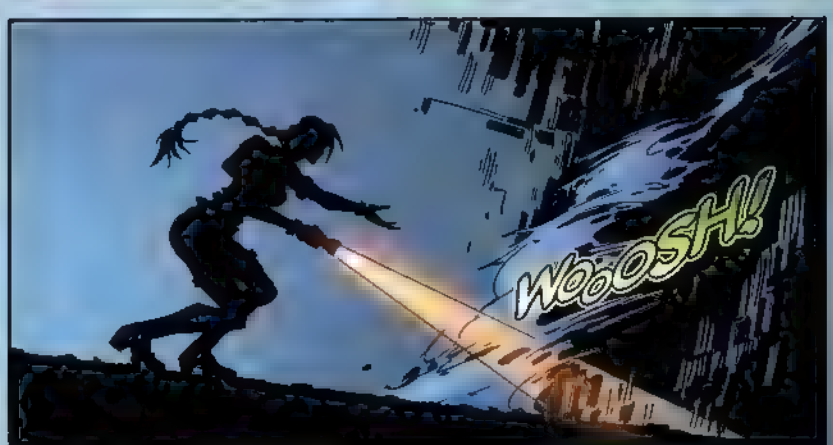
BAAM!
BAAM!
BAAM!
LET!
ME!
OUT!
AAAAAA!
OH... BYRON.

WHAT COULD HAVE CAUSED BYRON TO PANIC LIKE THAT? AND WHY HAS THIS DOOR BECOME SEALED SHUT?
IT SEEMS I'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER WAY OUT.

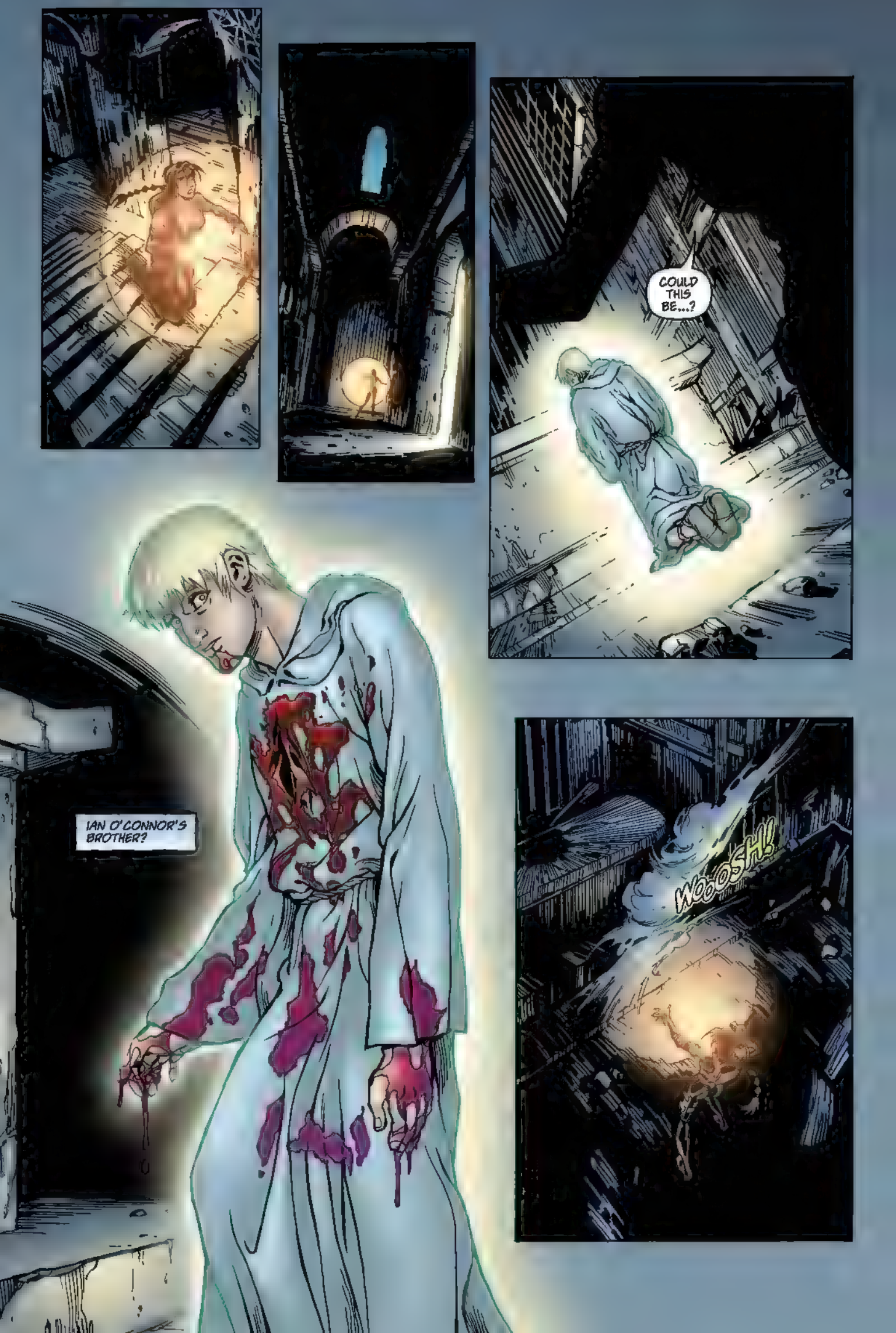
BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED IN LEAVING JUST YET, DESPITE WHAT HAPPENED TO POOR BYRON. I CAME HERE FOR THE DOLMEN EMERALD, AND I'M GOING TO FIND IT.

NO MATTER WHAT STANDS IN MY WAY.


HELLO THERE. WHAT'S YOUR NAME, DEAR?

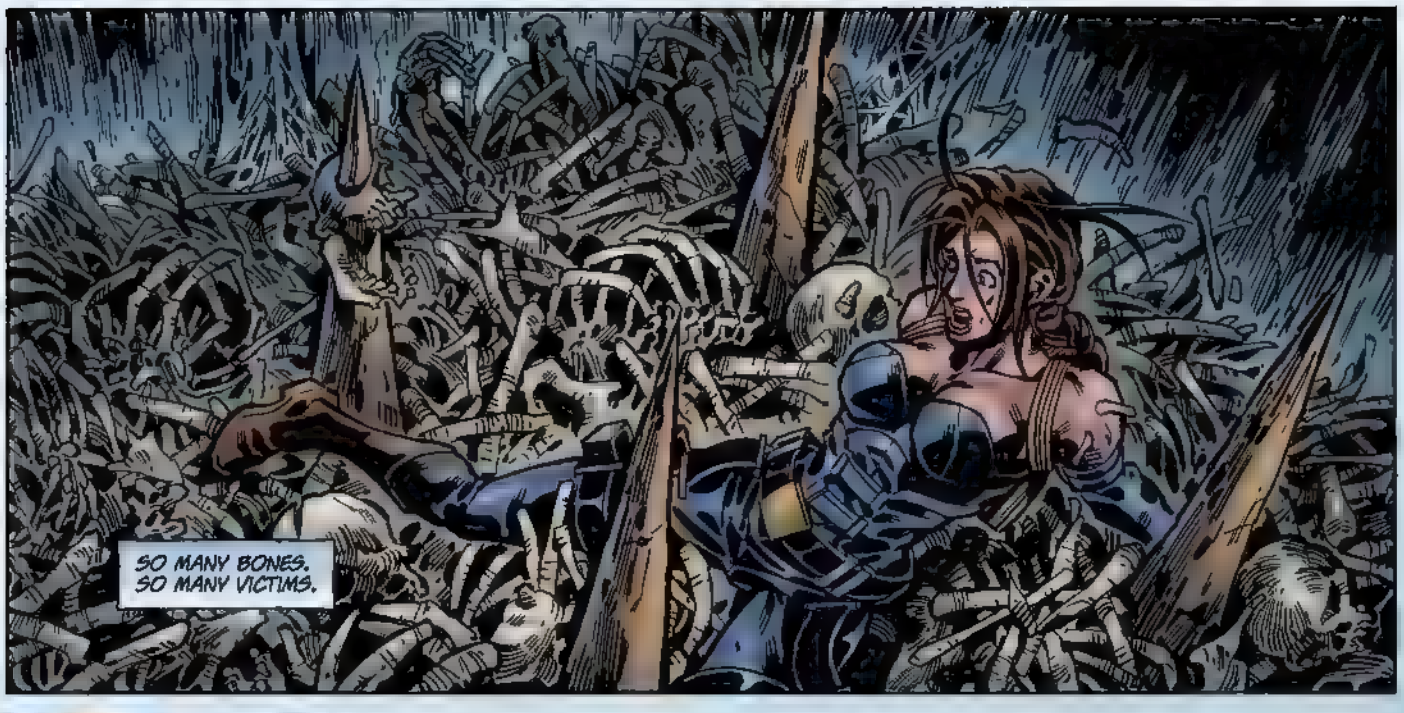

WOOOSH!

IT SEEMS THERE'S A SHRED OF TRUTH TO DUNLEAVY'S GHOST STORIES. EITHER THAT...
OR I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THINGS.
AARRGGRR!
BOOM! BOOM!
REAL OR NOT, THEY'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT TO MAKE ME TURN TAIL AND RUN.

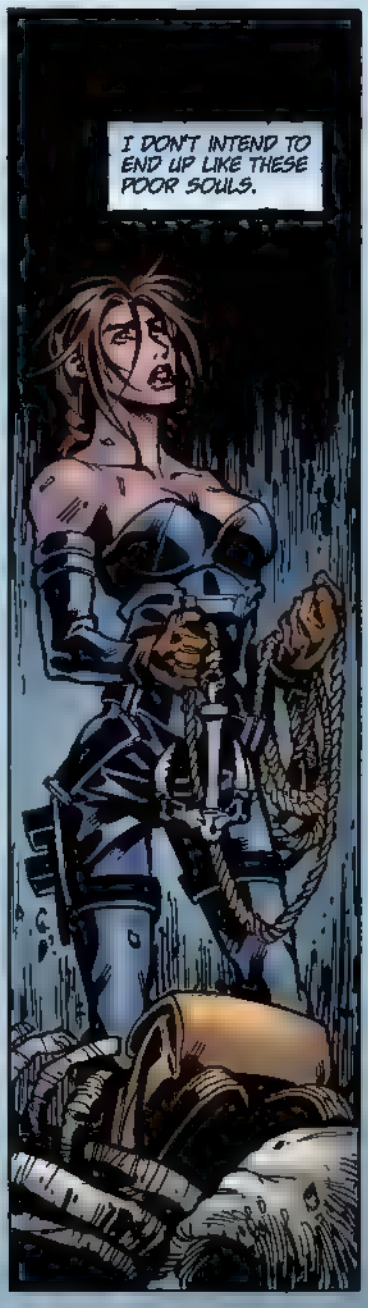

COULD THIS BE...?
IAN O'CONNOR'S BROTHER?
WOOOSH!

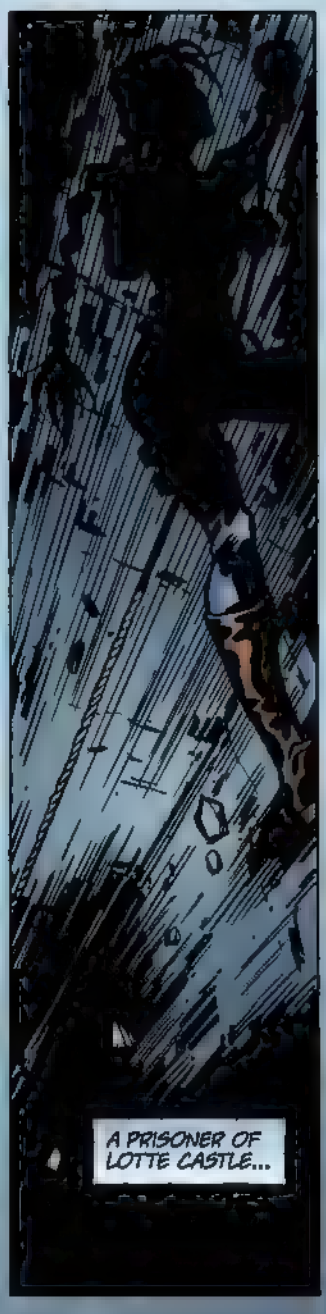
THE BLOODY CHAPEL.
BUT THE BLOOD IS STILL FRESH.
HOW COULD THAT BE? HOW COULD ANY OF THIS BE?
IT SUDDENLY SMELLS LIKE ROTTING FLESH. THERE'S SOMETHING IN HERE WITH ME. I CAN FEEL IT.
BUT IT'S NOT ANOTHER SPIRIT. THIS FEELS DIFFERENT. COULD IT BE?

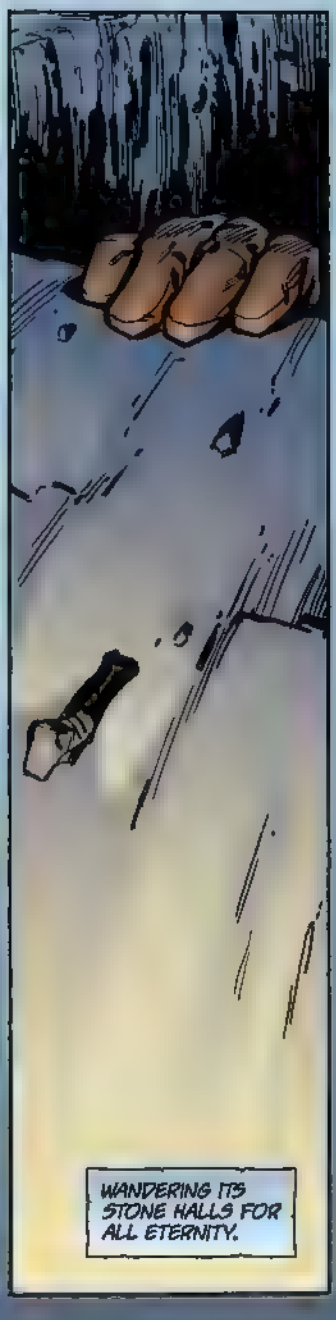
THE ELEMENTAL?
VAA-VOOOSH!
KRAAASH!
THUNKSSHH!

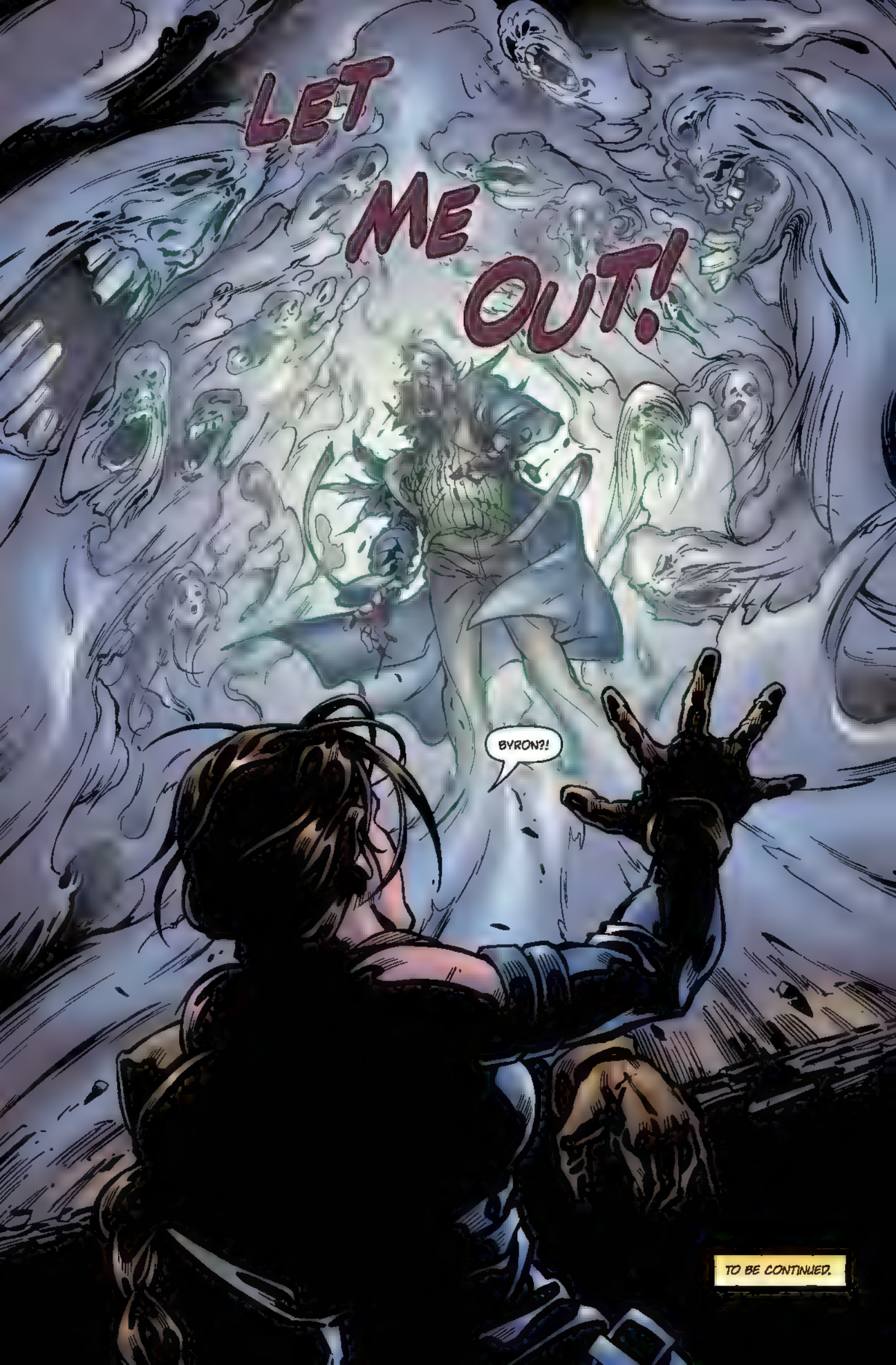

SO MANY BONES. SO MANY VICTIMS.

IT SEEMS THE KILLINGS AREN'T CONFINED TO THE PAST.

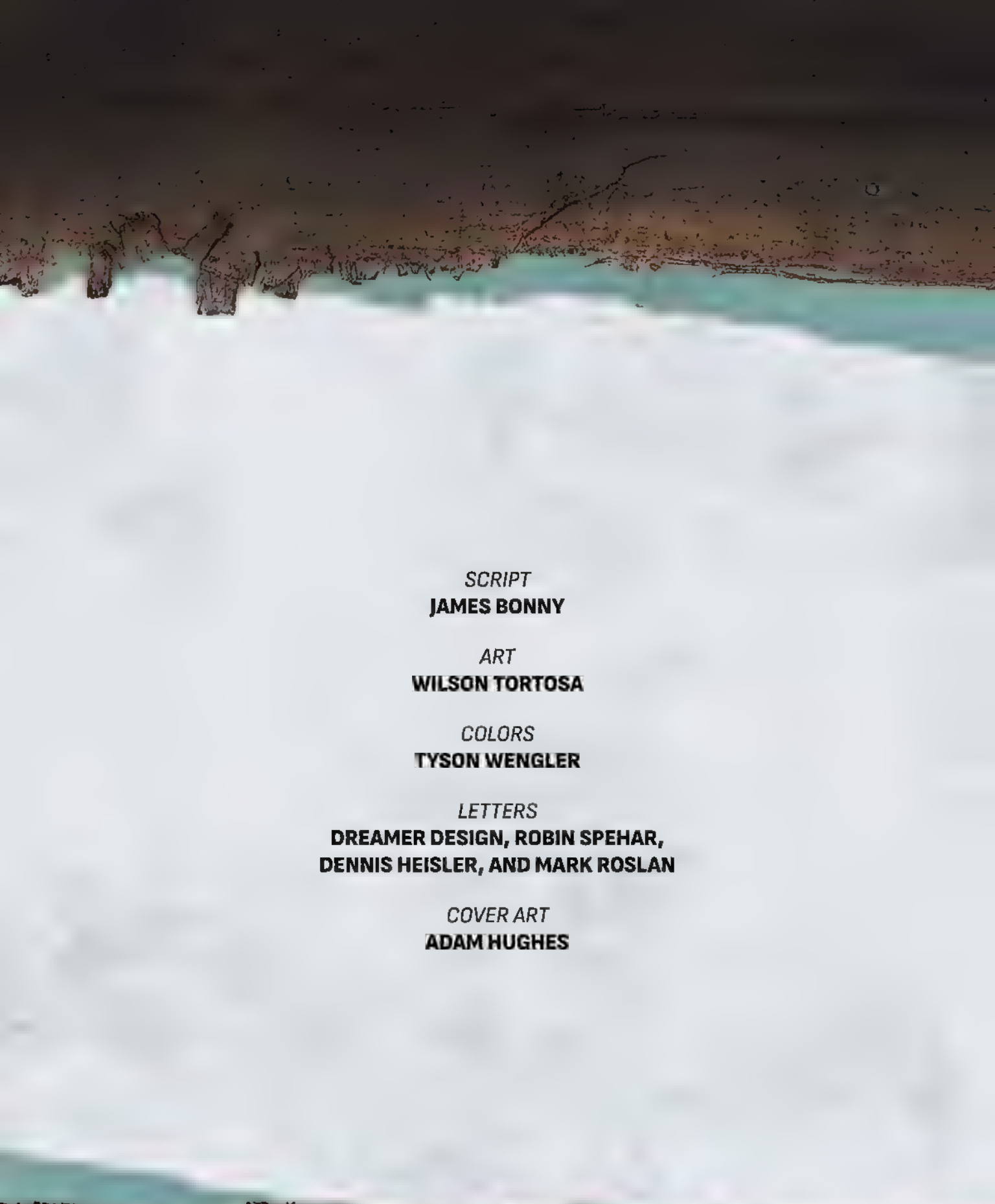

I DON'T INTEND TO END UP LIKE THESE POOR SOULS.


A PRISONER OF LOTTE CASTLE...


WANDERING ITS STONE HALLS FOR ALL ETERNITY.


LET ME OUT!
BYRON?!
TO BE CONTINUED.

TOWER OF SOULS PART 2



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LOTTE CASTLE IS SAID TO BE THE MOST HAUNTED CASTLE IN ALL OF IRELAND.
IT WAS THE SCENE OF BLOODSHED AND MISERY FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, BEGINNING IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, WHEN THE LOCAL CHIEFTAIN, IAN O'CONNOR, TORTURED TO DEATH SCORES OF VICTIMS.
BUT IT'S NOT ONLY THE SPIRITS OF IAN O'CONNOR'S VICTIMS WHICH SUPPOSEDLY HAUNT LOTTE CASTLE.
THERE'S ALSO THE HELLISH MANIFESTATION KNOWN AS THE ELEMENTAL. LEGEND HAS IT THAT TO ENCOUNTER THE ELEMENTAL IS TO BE DRIVEN TO EDGE OF MADNESS.

I CAME TO LOTTE CASTLE TO SEARCH FOR THE DOLMEN EMERALD, AN ANCIENT CELTIC TALISMAN, WHICH IS BELIEVED TO POSSESS POWERS OVER THE LIVING... AS WELL AS THE DEAD.
I ENLISTED THE HELP OF BYRON OWEN, A LIKEABLE IRISH ROGUE, WHO CONTACTED DUNLEAVY, THE STRANGE CARETAKER OF LOTTE CASTLE.

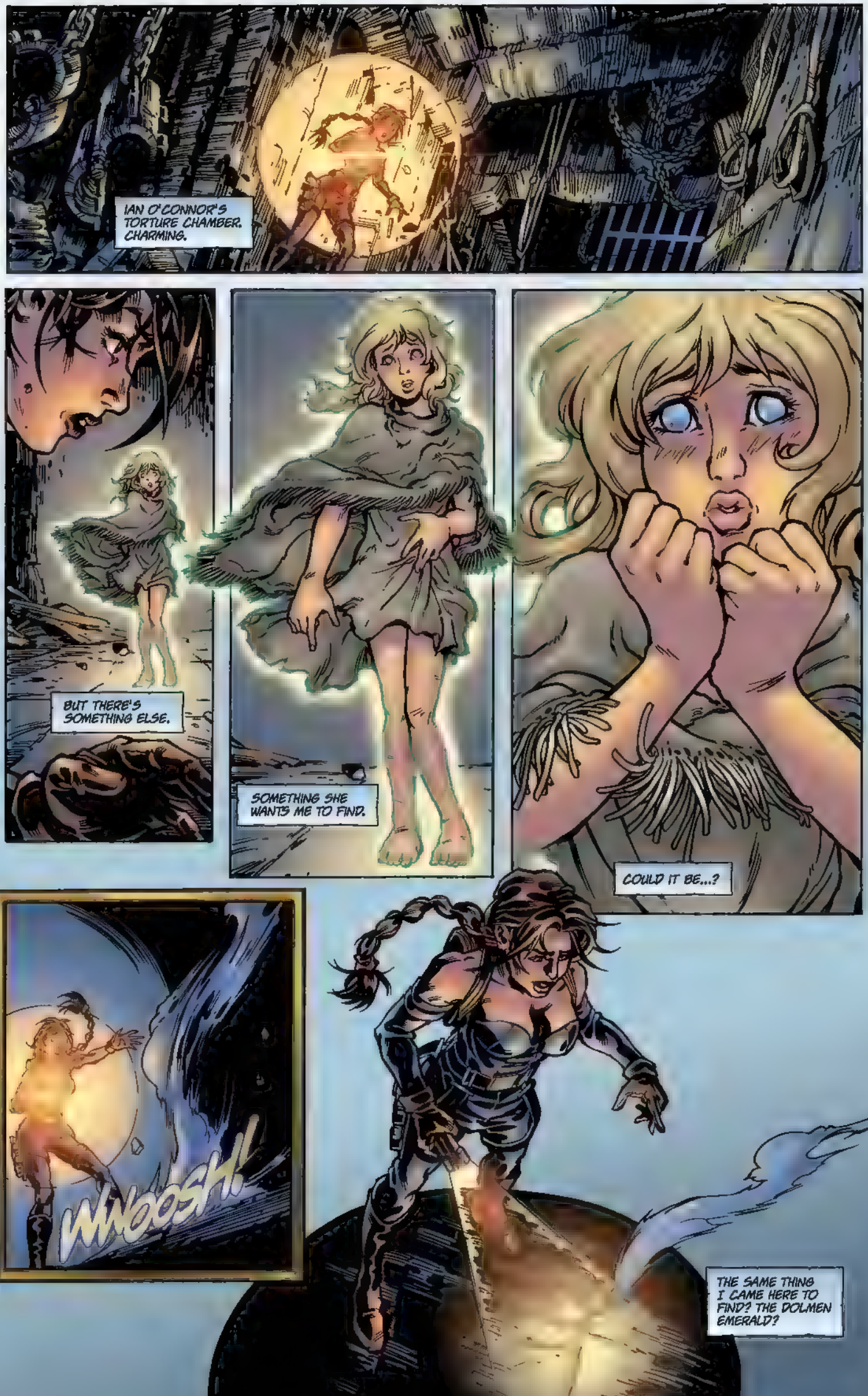
IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE LOTTE CASTLE CLAIMED ANOTHER VICTIM. BUT BEFORE WE COULD EVEN LOCATE DUNLEAVY'S BODY...

BYRON OWEN MET THE SAME FATE.
NOW I WAS ALONE.

AT LEAST, I THOUGHT I WAS.

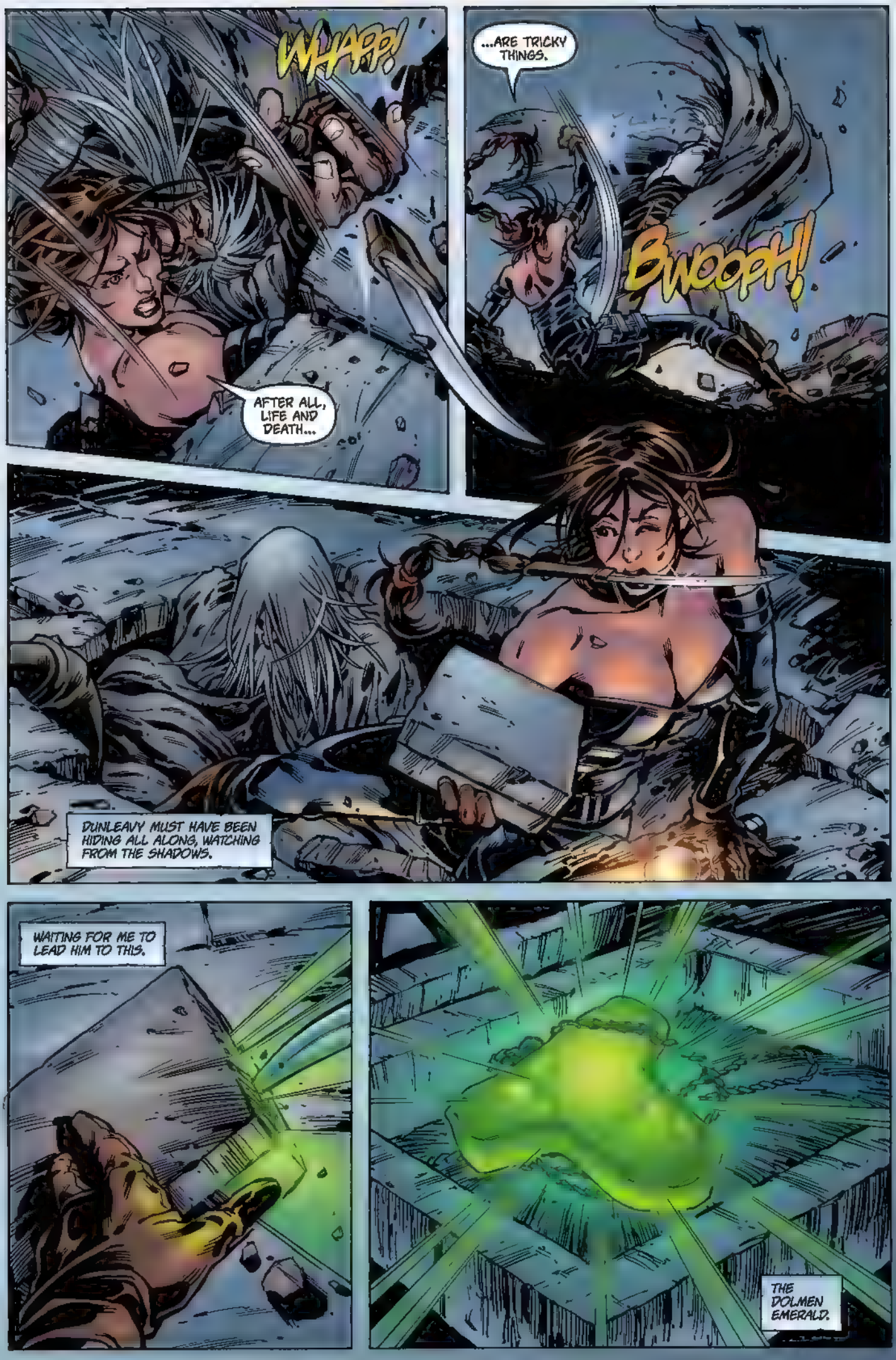
WWOOSH!
THE FRIGHTENED YOUNG GIRL I ENCOUNTERED IN THE CORRIDOR...
WHY HAS SHE REMAINED WHEN THE OTHERS VANISHED?
UNLESS SHE WANTS ME TO FOLLOW HER?
BUT FOLLOW HER TO WHERE?

MAYBE SHE WASN'T LEADING ME ANYWHERE?
THEN AGAIN...
BRRRNOOSHH!
MAYBE SHE WAS.


IAN O'CONNOR'S TORTURE CHAMBER. CHARMING.
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE.
SOMETHING SHE WANTS ME TO FIND.
COULD IT BE...?
WHOOSH!
THE SAME THING I CAME HERE TO FIND? THE DOLMEN EMERALD?

THE DOLMEN EMERALD WAS ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO THE CELTIC HIGH KING BUY A DARK SORCERER.
TCHNNKSH!
IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE HIGH KING CAME TO REALIZE IT WAS A CURSE, NOT A GIFT.
THE DOLMEN EMERALD WAS LAST KNOWN TO BE IN THE POSSESSION OF IAN O'CONNOR, WHO LEARNED HOW TO CONTROL THE POWER OF THE TALISMAN...
CRNCH!
EVEN THOUGH IT CURSED EVERYTHING AROUND IT. LIVING AND DEAD.
CRNCHK!
COULD IT BE HERE?
WHATAVE YA GOT THERE, GIRL?

OH, THERE YOU ARE, MR. DUNLEAVY. I SEE YOU'RE NOT DEAD AFTER ALL.
OR ARE YOU? IT'S A BIT HARD TO TELL AROUND THIS PLACE.
AYE, LASS. I CAN STILL COUNT MYSELF AMONG THE LIVING.
BUT YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND...
WON'T BE ABLE TO SAY THE SAME MUCH LONGER.
AAARRRR!
I WOULDN'T BE SO CERTAIN ABOUT THAT.


WHAP!
AFTER ALL, LIFE AND DEATH...
...ARE TRICKY THINGS.
BWOOPH!
DUNLEAVY MUST HAVE BEEN HIDING ALL ALONG, WATCHING FROM THE SHADOWS.
WAITING FOR ME TO LEAD HIM TO THIS.
THE DOLMEN EMERALD.

I CAN FEEL ITS POWER BORING INTO ME. IT'S BOTH FRIGHTENING... AND INTOXICATING.
HOW COULD I HAVE THOUGHT I'D BE [illegible] TO ITS POWER? THAT IT WOULDN'T CURSE ME AS WELL?
MAYBE COMING HERE WAS A MISTAKE.
THAT SMELL...
THERE'S SOMETHING HERE WITH ME. THE SAME PRESENCE I FELT IN THE BLOODY CHAPEL.
THE ELEMENTAL.
IT WANTS THE DOLMEN EMERALD.

AAAEEEEYYY!
BUT I GOT TO IT FIRST.
BLAMM!
BLAMM!
BLAAMM!
AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO GIVE IT UP.
THE ELEMENTAL ATTACKED ME WITH FORCE IN THE BLOODY CHAPEL. BUT NOW... SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT.
PERHAPS BECAUSE I HAVE THE TALISMAN NOW.
TIME TO LEAVE THIS CHARMING PLACE.

IF THE DOOR IS STILL SEALED SHUT, I'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER WAY OUT OF HERE. WHICH SHOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFICULT.
VAAVOOOSSH!
BRMBRBRBR!
THUUUD!
THIEVIN' WENCH!

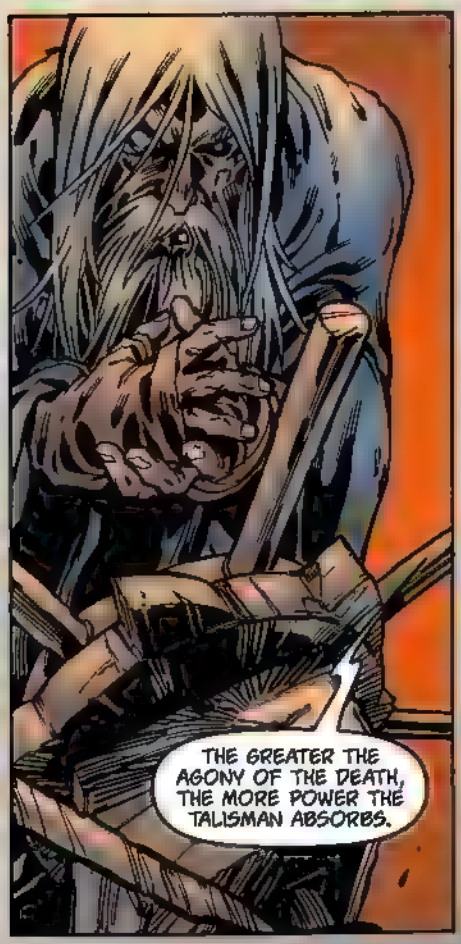
WERE YA THINKIN' OF LEAVING LOTTE CASTLE WITH MY PROPERTY?!

WHO ARE YOU?
I'M THE BLOODY CHIEFTAIN AROUND THESE PARTS. HAVE BEEN FOR A BLOODY LONG TIME.
SO YOU'RE...?
IAN O'CONNOR, IN THE FLESH.
IAN O'CONNOR DIED OVER FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
YOU'RE RIGHT, LASS. BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, I SHOULD'VE MET MY MAKER LONG AGO...
...BUT I DIDN'T!
SWOOSH!
FH-KRUNCH!
THUNK!

WHERE...?
YOU'RE AT PERDITION'S EDGE, LASS. AND I'LL BE SENDING YOU OVER THE SIDE...
...RIGHT AFTER A PROLONGED AND AGONIZING DEATH.
A FITTING FATE FOR A THIEF WHO TRIED TO STEAL FROM ME THE GREATEST TREASURE THERE EVER WAS.
THE DOLMEN EMERALD. THE SOURCE OF "TIR NA NOG." THE REALM OF ETERNAL YOUTH.
AS LONG AS I POSSESS THE TALISMAN, I SHALL NEVER DIE.
A SHAME THOSE POOR SOULS YOU TORTURED TO DEATH MUST PAY THE PRICE FOR YOUR IMMORTALITY.
THE TALISMAN CURSES THEM, DOESN'T IT? MAKES THEM ETERNAL PRISONERS OF THIS CASTLE?

TRUTH BE TOLD, THE PROCUREMENT OF FRESH SOULS PLAYS A VITAL PART IN THE POWER OF THE TALISMAN.
MISTER DUNLEAVY HERE IS MY LATEST AGENT IN THAT ENDEAVOR.
AND I'LL BE REWARDED BEYOND THIS WORLD, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, M'LORD?
BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, YES.

THE TALISMAN DRAWS POWER FROM TORMENT AND DEATH.


THE GREATER THE AGONY OF THE DEATH, THE MORE POWER THE TALISMAN ABSORBS.

I HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR VISIT TO LOTTE CASTLE, GIRL, BECAUSE YOU'RE ABOUT TO BECOME A PERMANENT RESIDENT. HEH.

KLAK-KLAK!

AAaAHHAA!
AS LONG AS I LIVE, I DON'T BELIEVE I'LL EVER GROW TIRED OF THIS.
KLAK-KLAK!
KLAK-KLAK!
SAINTS HELP ME!
AEEEEYY!

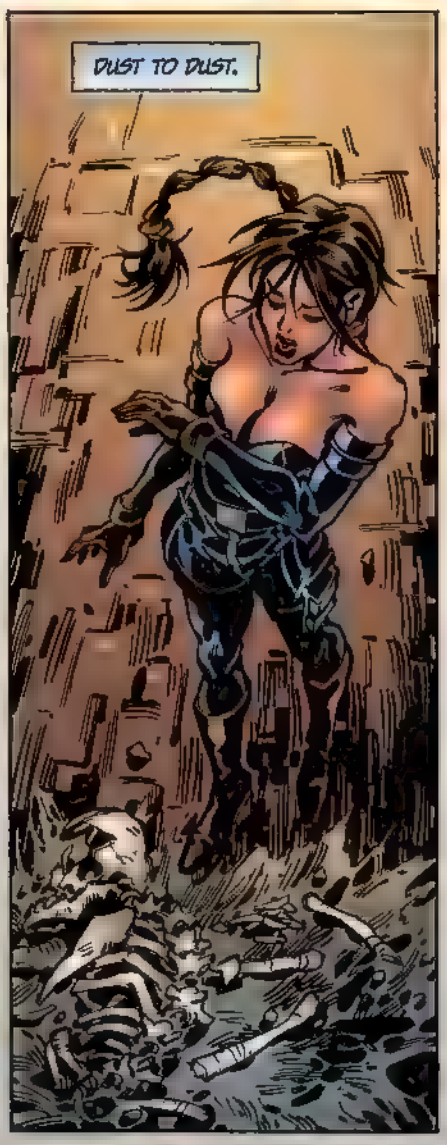
AAAIEEEEE!
THUNNK!
WWOOW!
UHHH...
YOU CURSED WRETCH! HOW DARE YOU INTERFERE?

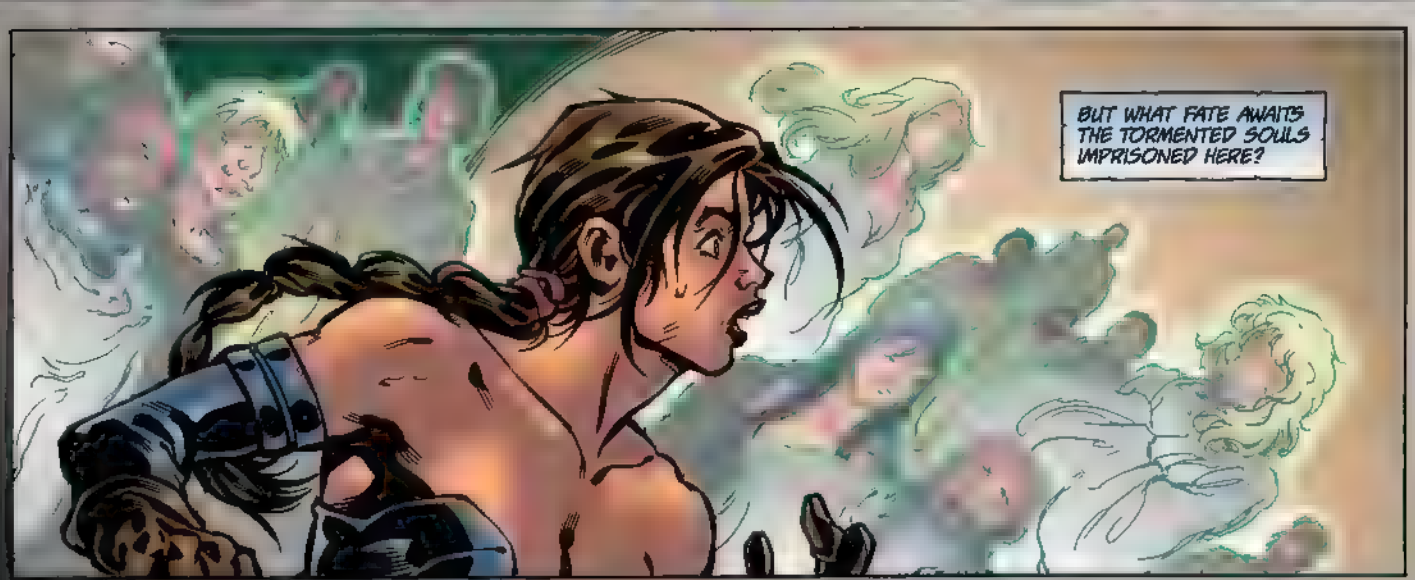
YOU DAMNATION! THE TALISMAN IS MINE! YOU'LL NEVER GET IT BACK!
WOOF!
I'LL TAKE THAT.
THE ELEMENTAL WANTS THE TALISMAN... BACK?
COULD THIS BE THE DARK SORCERER, CURSED BEYOND DEATH?

IF YOU ARE THE DARK SORCERER, AND YOU POSSESS THE TALISMAN ONCE AGAIN, PERHAPS THE CURSE WILL BE LIFTED FROM THIS PLACE.
DON'T DO IT, WENCH!
WORTH A TRY.
NOOOOO!
MUHMMM!
VUVAAASHH!

NOOOO!

EEE
EEEYAAAA
RRRHH!!
THUD
TNKSHH!

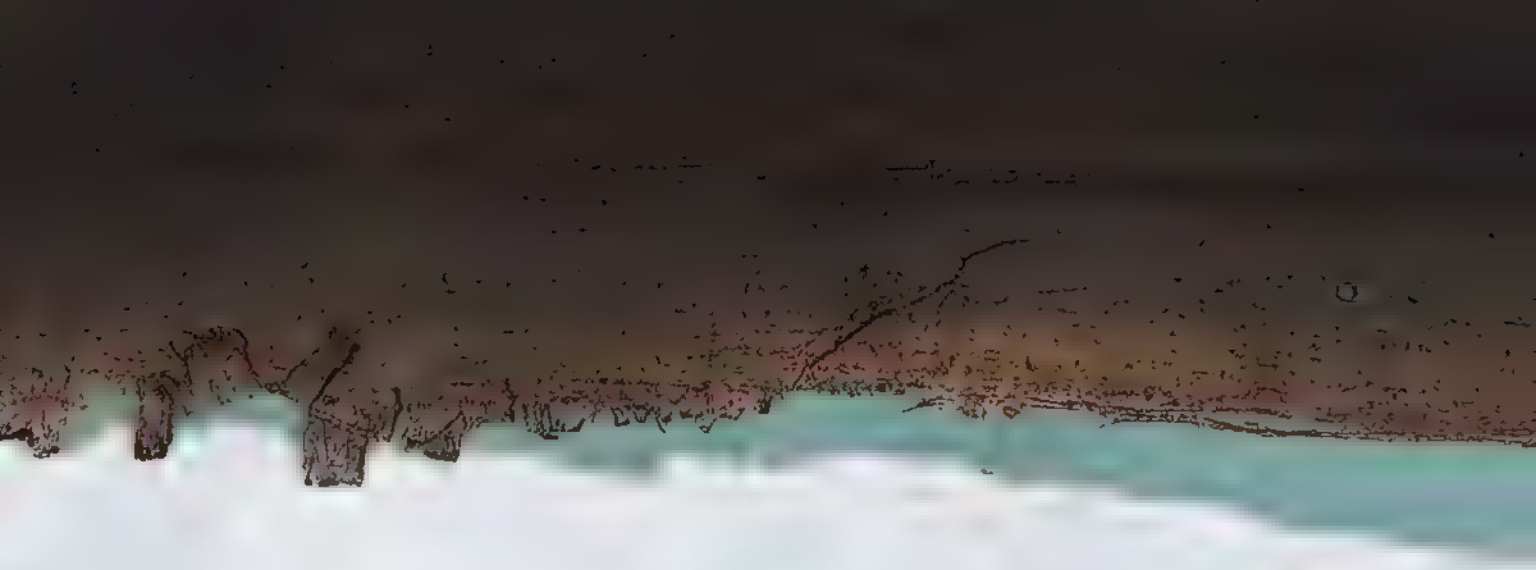

DUST TO DUST.


BUT WHAT FATE AWAITS THE TORMENTED SOULS IMPRISONED HERE?

WWWOOOSHH!

VuWOOSH!
VuWOOSH!
VuWOOOSHHH!
REST IN PEACE, BYRON OWEN.

BLOODY LEECHES! BURNIN' WORMS! SQUIRMIN' IN MY HEAD! BURNIN'!
TO ENCOUNTER THE ELEMENTAL DRIVES A PERSON TO THE EDGE OF MADNESS.
BURNIN'!
OR, IN MISTER DUNLEAVY'S CASE, OVER THE EDGE.
EVERYONE ALIVE EVENTUALLY DIES. THAT'S A FACT OF LIFE.
BELIEVING THAT THERE'S LIFE AFTER DEATH CAN BE COMFORTING.
AND ALSO A BIT FRIGHTENING.
THE END.



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INKS
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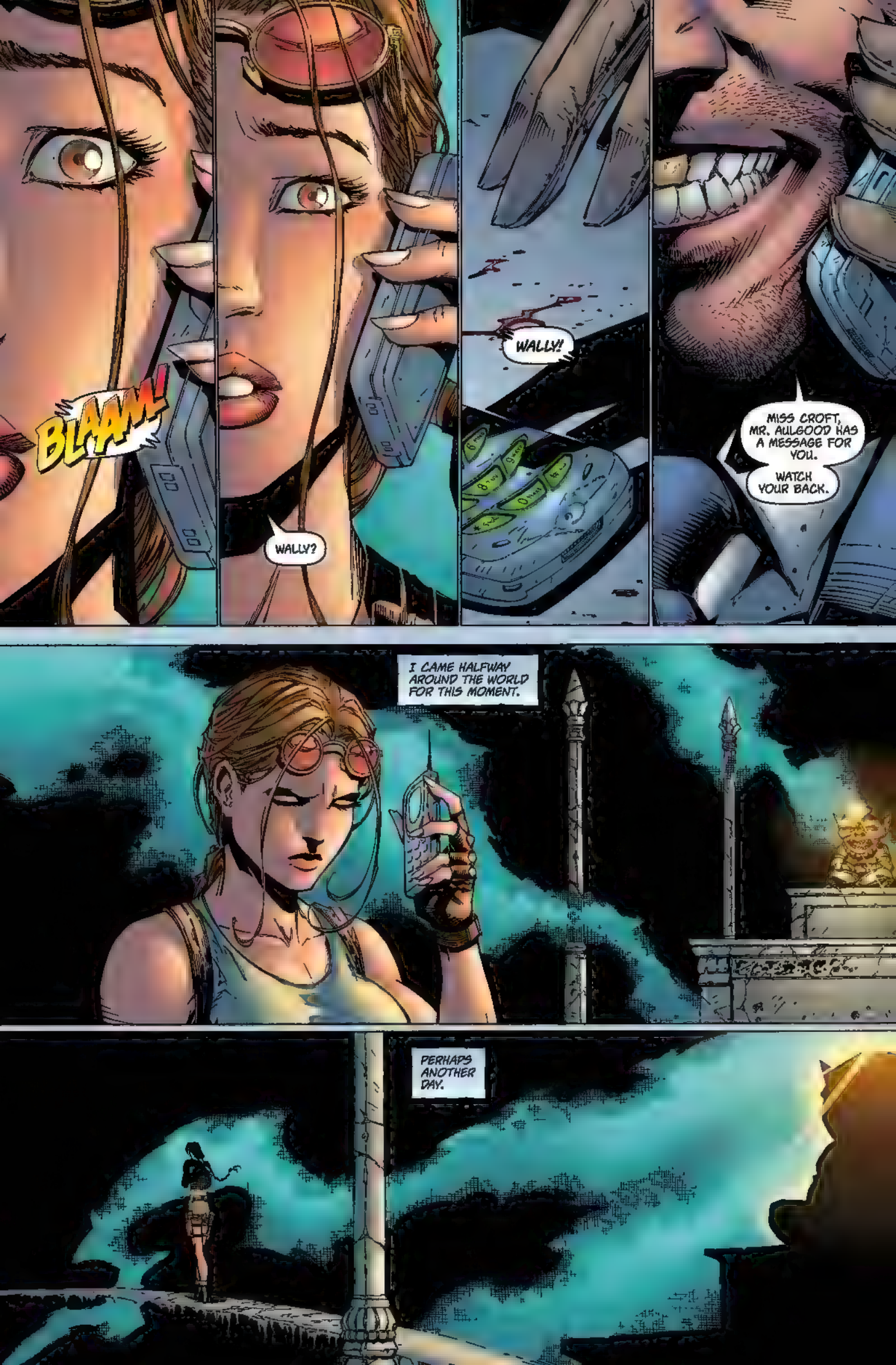
EASTERN MALAYSIA.
GOOD AND EVIL.
ARE THEY OPPOSITE FORCES?
OR TWO SIDES OF THE SAME EQUATION?
OR PERHAPS IT'S ALL ABOUT BALANCE.
WHICH IS PRECISELY WHAT THE ANCIENT SHAMANISTS BELIEVED WHEN THEY CREATED A GOLDEN IDOL THAT BALANCED THE FORCE OF GOOD AND THE FORCE OF EVIL. THEY ALSO BELIEVED THE IDOL COULD NEVER BE TOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS.
I WAS ABOUT TO PUT THOSE BELIEFS TO THE TEST.

BREEP BREEEP!
HELLO.
LARA, IT'S...
WALLY? YOU SOUND... WHAT'S WRONG?
ALWAYS COULD READ ME LIKE A CLOCK. YOU REMEMBER THAT BUSINESS BACK IN SYDNEY?
AULGOOD?
THAT'S THE ONE. I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO BREAK THIS TO YOU, LOVE... BUT THAT RICH BLOKE HAS GONE AND TARGETED YOU FOR THE BIG ONE.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT, WALLY?
BECAUSE HE'S TARGETED ME AS WELL.

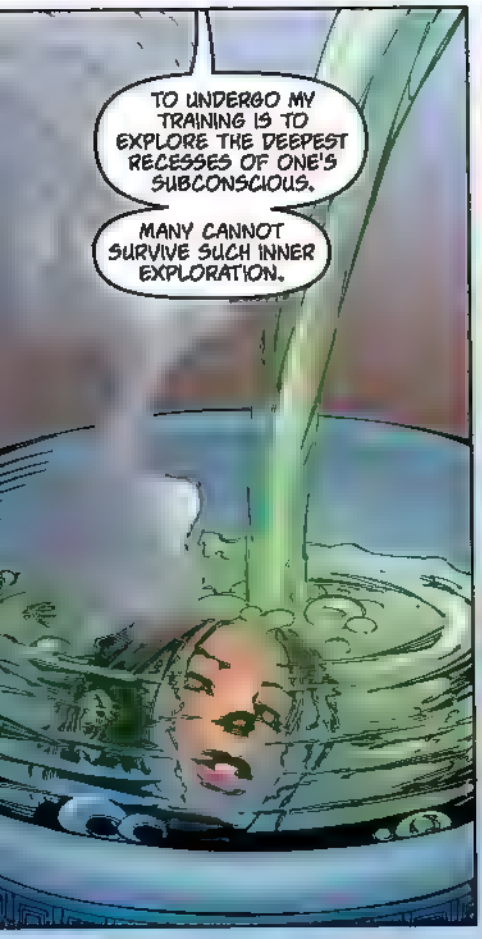

BLAAM!
WALLY?
WALLY!
MISS CROFT, MR. AULGOOD HAS A MESSAGE FOR YOU.
WATCH YOUR BACK.
I CAME HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD FOR THIS MOMENT.
PERHAPS ANOTHER DAY.

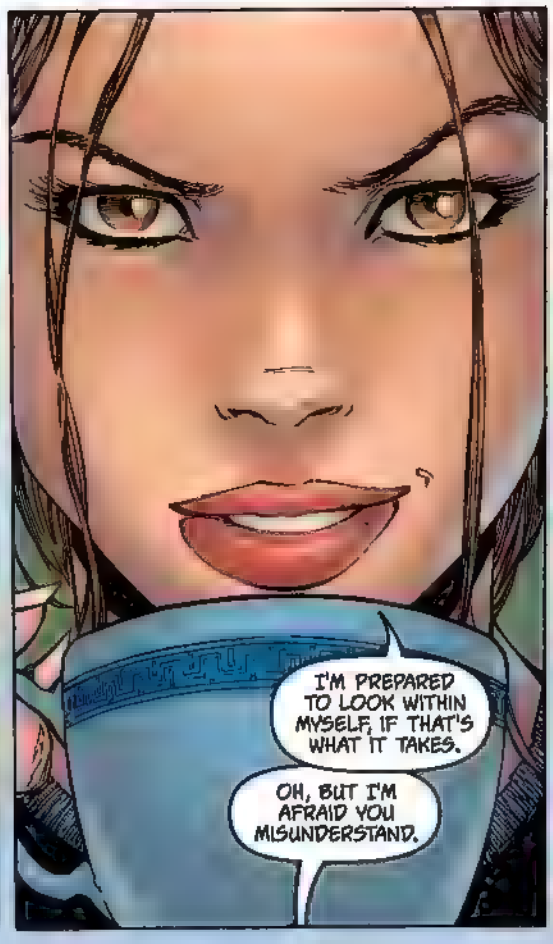
WESTERN CAMBODIA.
WALLY MACALISTER WAS A GOOD, LOYAL FRIEND. HE HELPED ME TAKE ON J. BRADLEY AULGOOD IN SYDNEY. AND FOR DOING SO, HE PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE.
NOW I WAS TARGETED FOR DEATH BY AULGOOD, ONE OF THE RICHEST AND MOST POWERFUL MEN IN THE WORLD. THERE'S NO PLACE I COULD RUN THAT HIS OPERATIVES COULDN'T REACH ME.
BUT I HAD NO INTENTION OF RUNNING.
I INTEND TO TAKE THE FIGHT TO AULGOOD.
BUT NOT BEFORE I'M READY.
A FIGHT OF THIS MAGNITUDE WILL REQUIRE SOME PREPARATION. WHICH IS WHY I'VE COME HERE.

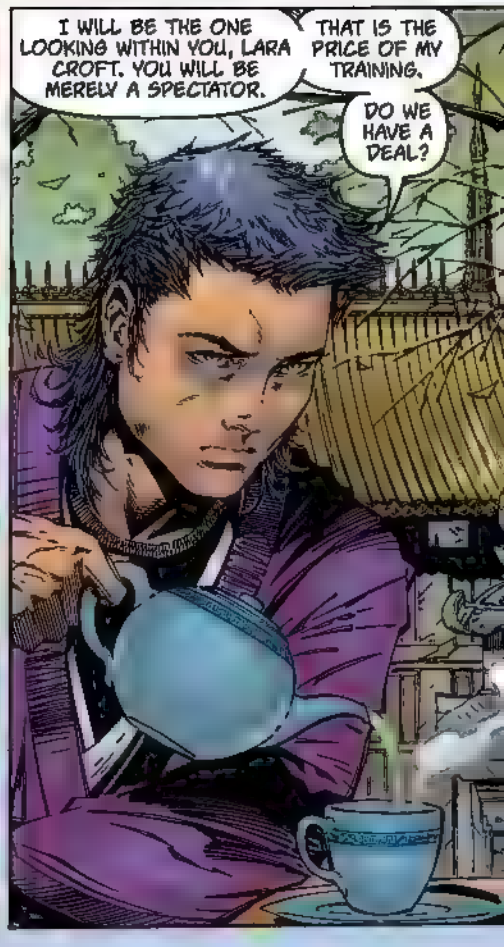
IN MY TRAVELS, I'VE HEARD STORIES OF A LEGENDARY FIGURE WHO IS AS SKILLED IN THE ARTS OF MARTIAL COMBAT AS HE IS IN THE WAYS OF MYSTICAL POWERS.
HE'S KNOWN AS ZINN, THE DARK MASTER. IT'S SAID THAT TO BE TRAINED BY ZINN IS TO DISCOVER HIDDEN POWERS WITHIN ONE'S SELF. POWERS WHICH CAN MAKE ONE NEARLY INVINCIBLE.
BUT AT A COST.
WELCOME, LARA CROFT. I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
EXPECTING ME? HOW?
I WAS ALERTED OF YOUR APPROACH.
ALERTED... BY WHOM?
ALERTED BY YOUR FEAR.

EXACTLY HOW DID YOU KNOW OF ME?
I SUPPOSE THE SAME WAY YOU KNEW OF ME, MISTER ZINN. BY REPUTATION.
YES. I HAVE HEARD OF LARA CROFT. I HAVE HEARD OF YOUR BOLD COURAGE. IT'S REFRESHING TO SEE THAT YOUR REPUTATION IS WELL DESERVED.
HOW DO YOU MEAN?
NOT EVEN THE KHMER ROUGE WOULD DARE COME HERE. YET YOU CAME ALONE.
THAT IS IMPRESSIVE.
SO YOU WISH TO UNDERGO TRAINING? DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT ENTAILS?
I'M PREPARED FOR WHATEVER IT ENTAILS.
ARE YOU INDEED? WELL, WE SHALL SEE.
DO YOU EVEN HAVE THE REFLEXES FOR SUCH TRAINING, I WONDER?
TRY ME.
WWWZZZ! WWWZZZ! WWWZZZ!
THUNK!
VERY WELL. LET'S TALK.

THIS IS NOT MERELY PHYSICAL, YOU UNDERSTAND. IT REACHES MUCH DEEPER THAN THAT.


TO UNDERGO MY TRAINING IS TO EXPLORE THE DEEPEST RECESSES OF ONE'S SUBCONSCIOUS.
MANY CANNOT SURVIVE SUCH INNER EXPLORATION.


I'M PREPARED TO LOOK WITHIN MYSELF, IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES.
OH, BUT I'M AFRAID YOU MISUNDERSTAND.

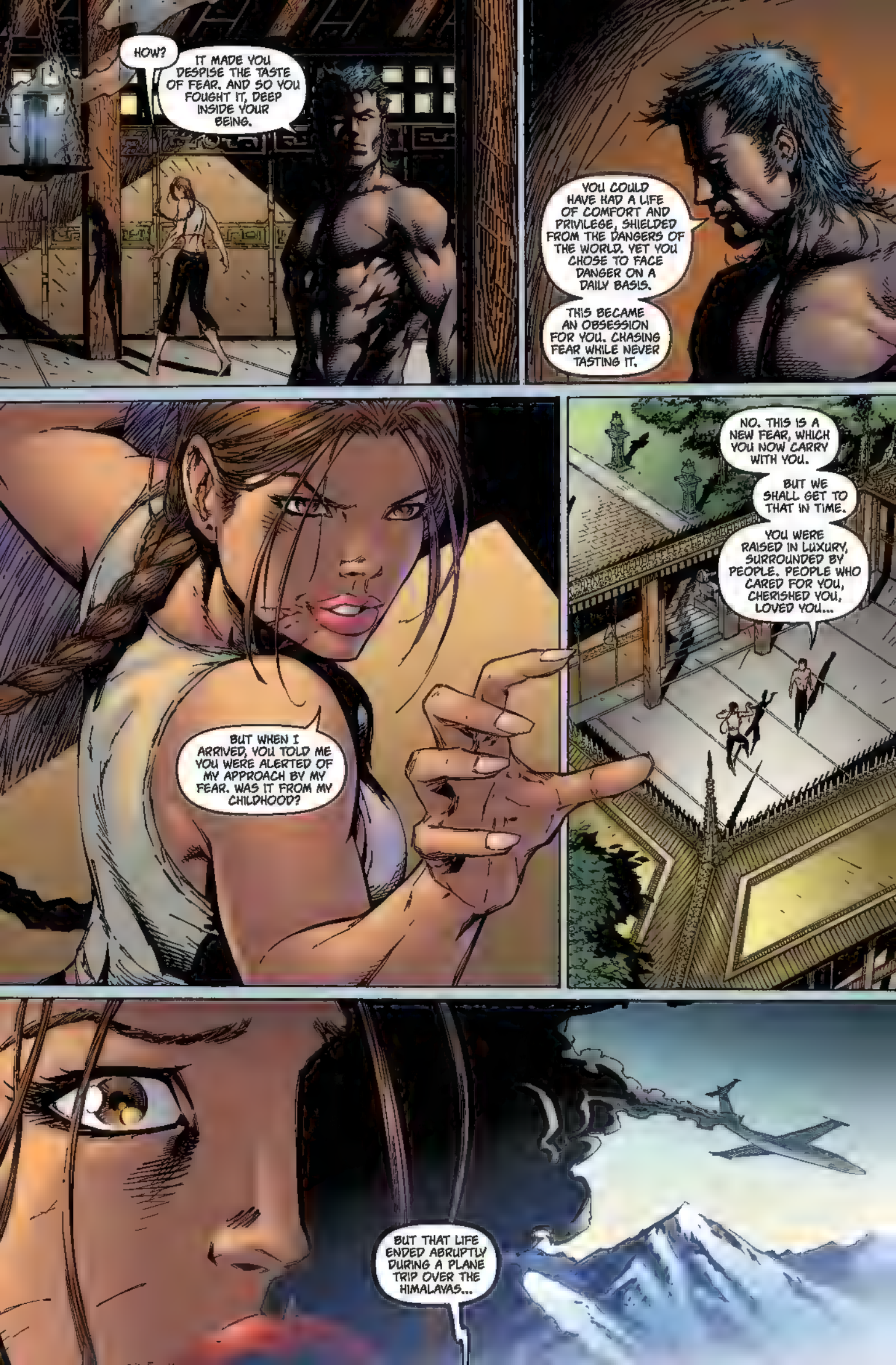

I WILL BE THE ONE LOOKING WITHIN YOU, LARA CROFT. YOU WILL BE MERELY A SPECTATOR.
THAT IS THE PRICE OF MY TRAINING.
DO WE HAVE A DEAL?

YES. WHEN DO WE BEGIN?
RIGHT AFTER WE FINISH OUR TEA.

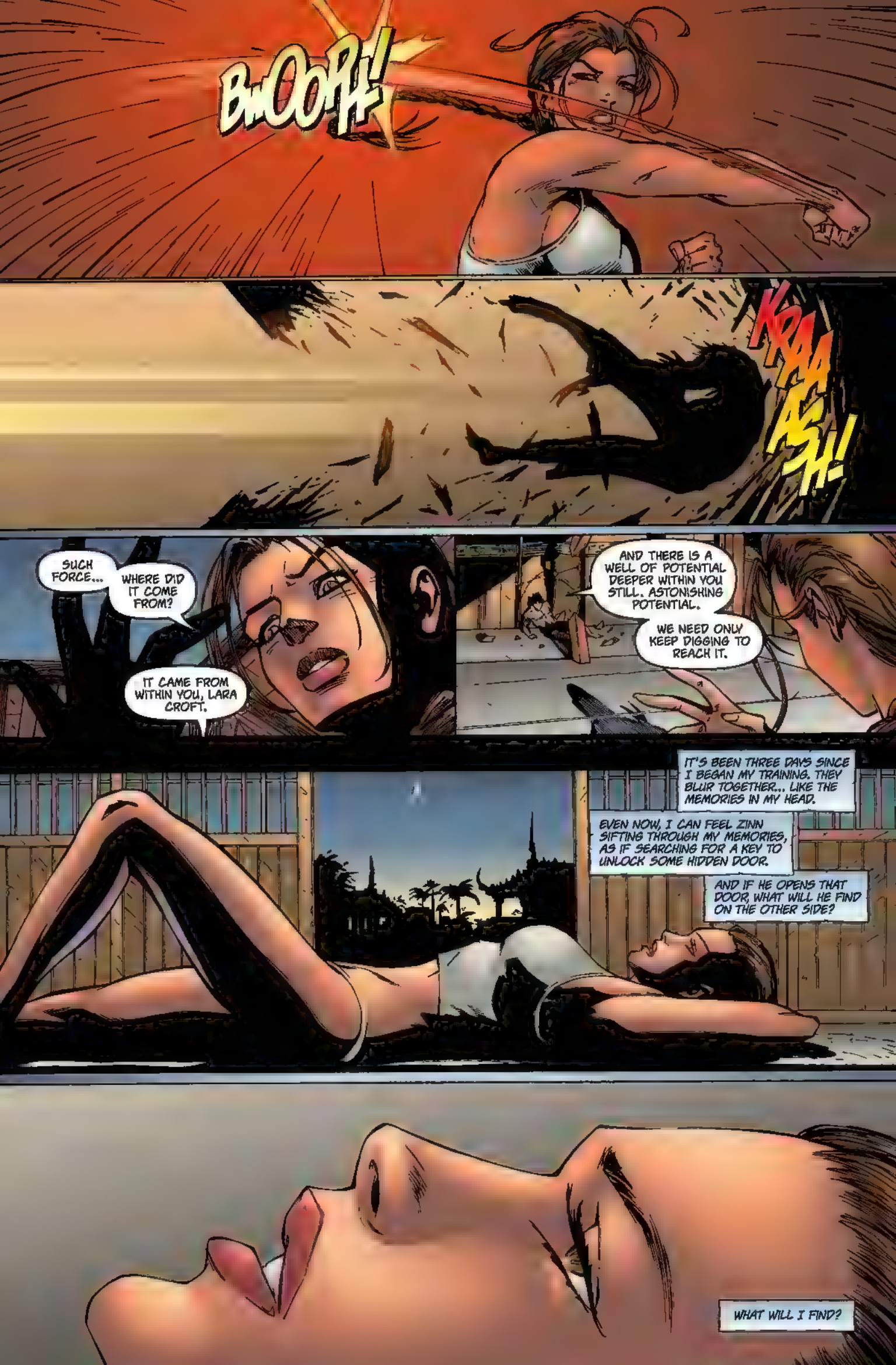
I WASN'T ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE WITH THIS RATHER BIZARRE ARRANGEMENT.
NOT ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE WITH THE PROSPECT OF A MAN LIKE ZINN PEERING INTO THE RECESSES OF MY SUBCONSCIOUS.
BUT IF THIS IS WHAT IT WOULD TAKE TO GIVE ME AN EDGE OVER MY ADVERSARIES, I WAS WILLING TO GO THROUGH WITH IT.
TRY TO ANTICIPATE MY MOVES WITHOUT DREADING THEM.
WHOOSH!
WELCOME THE ATTACK...
BWOPH!

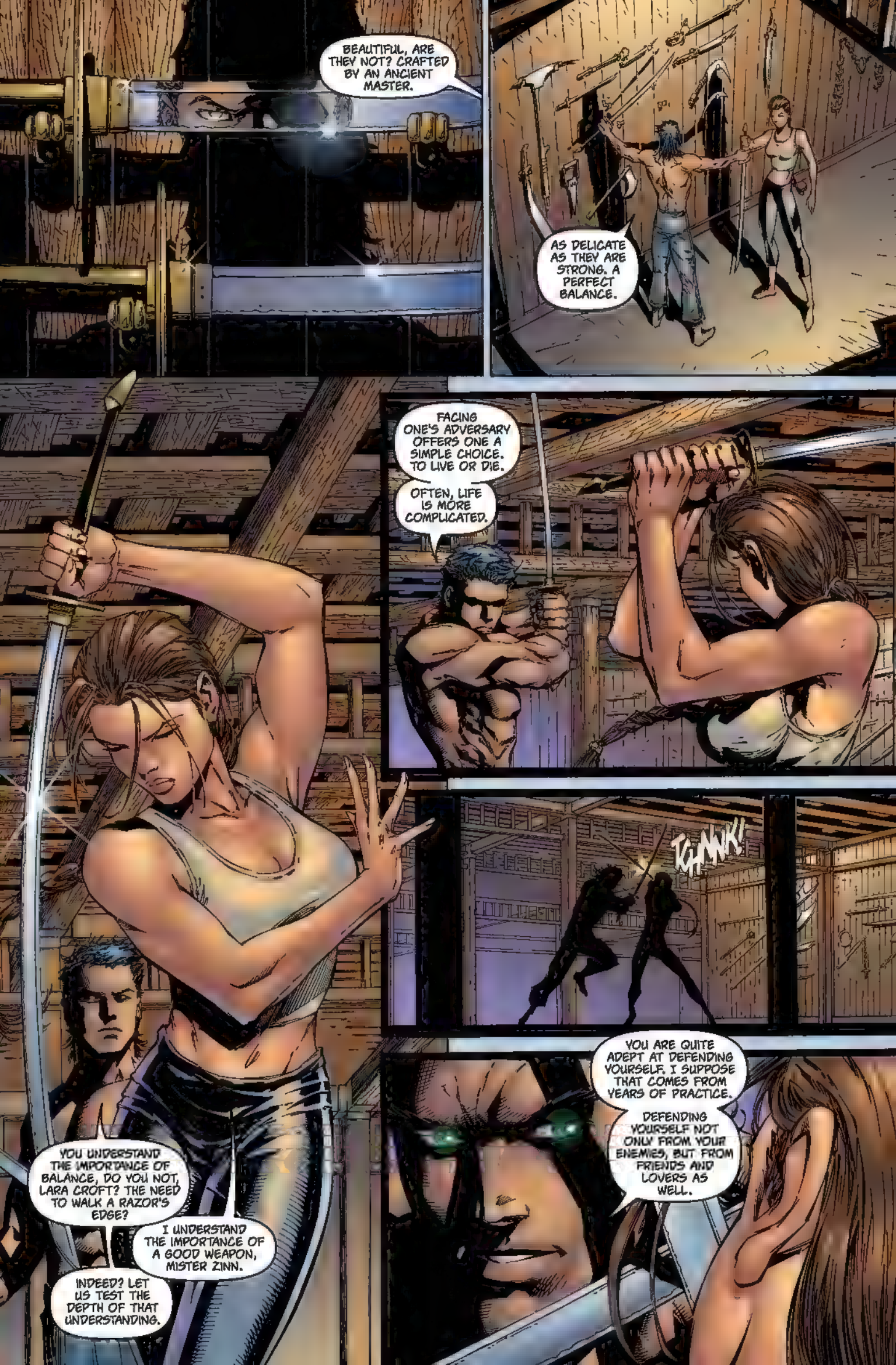
WOOMPH!

WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST FEAR, LARA CROFT?
WH-WHAT?
YOUR EARLIEST FEAR. DO YOU REMEMBER IT?
NO.
YES. YOU DO.
IT TAKES THE FORM OF A SNARLING DOG.
YOUR AUNTY'S BELOVED CORGI, TO BE EXACT. NOT A LARGE DOG...
BUT LARGE ENOUGH TO STRIKE TERROR IN THE HEART OF A FOUR-YEAR-OLD GIRL.
BEASTLY LITTLE CREATURE. I STILL HAVE THE SCAR.
AND YOU STILL HAVE THE SCAR WITHIN YOU AS WELL. YET THIS TRAUMATIC EVENT SHAPED YOU. BECAME A PART OF WHO YOU ARE.

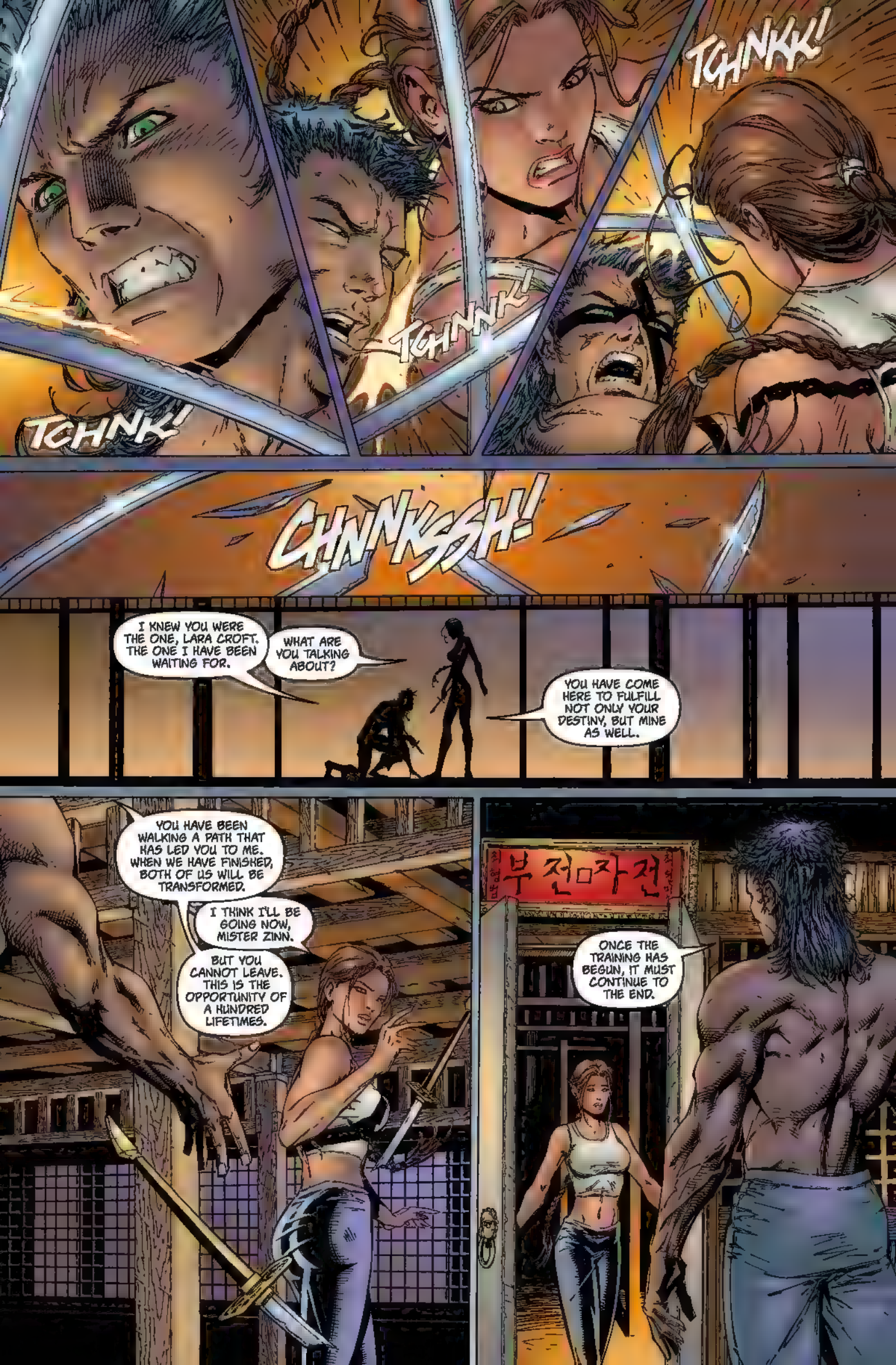

HOW?
IT MADE YOU DESPISE THE TASTE OF FEAR. AND SO YOU FOUGHT IT, DEEP INSIDE YOUR BEING.
YOU COULD HAVE HAD A LIFE OF COMFORT AND PRIVILEGE, SHIELDED FROM THE DANGERS OF THE WORLD. YET YOU CHOSE TO FACE DANGER ON A DAILY BASIS.
THIS BECAME AN OBSESSION FOR YOU. CHASING FEAR WHILE NEVER TASTING IT.
BUT WHEN I ARRIVED, YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE ALERTED OF MY APPROACH BY MY FEAR. WAS IT FROM MY CHILDHOOD?
NO. THIS IS A NEW FEAR, WHICH YOU NOW CARRY WITH YOU.
BUT WE SHALL GET TO THAT IN TIME.
YOU WERE RAISED IN LUXURY, SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE. PEOPLE WHO CARED FOR YOU, CHERISHED YOU, LOVED YOU...
BUT THAT LIFE ENDED ABRUPTLY DURING A PLANE TRIP OVER THE HIMALAYAS...

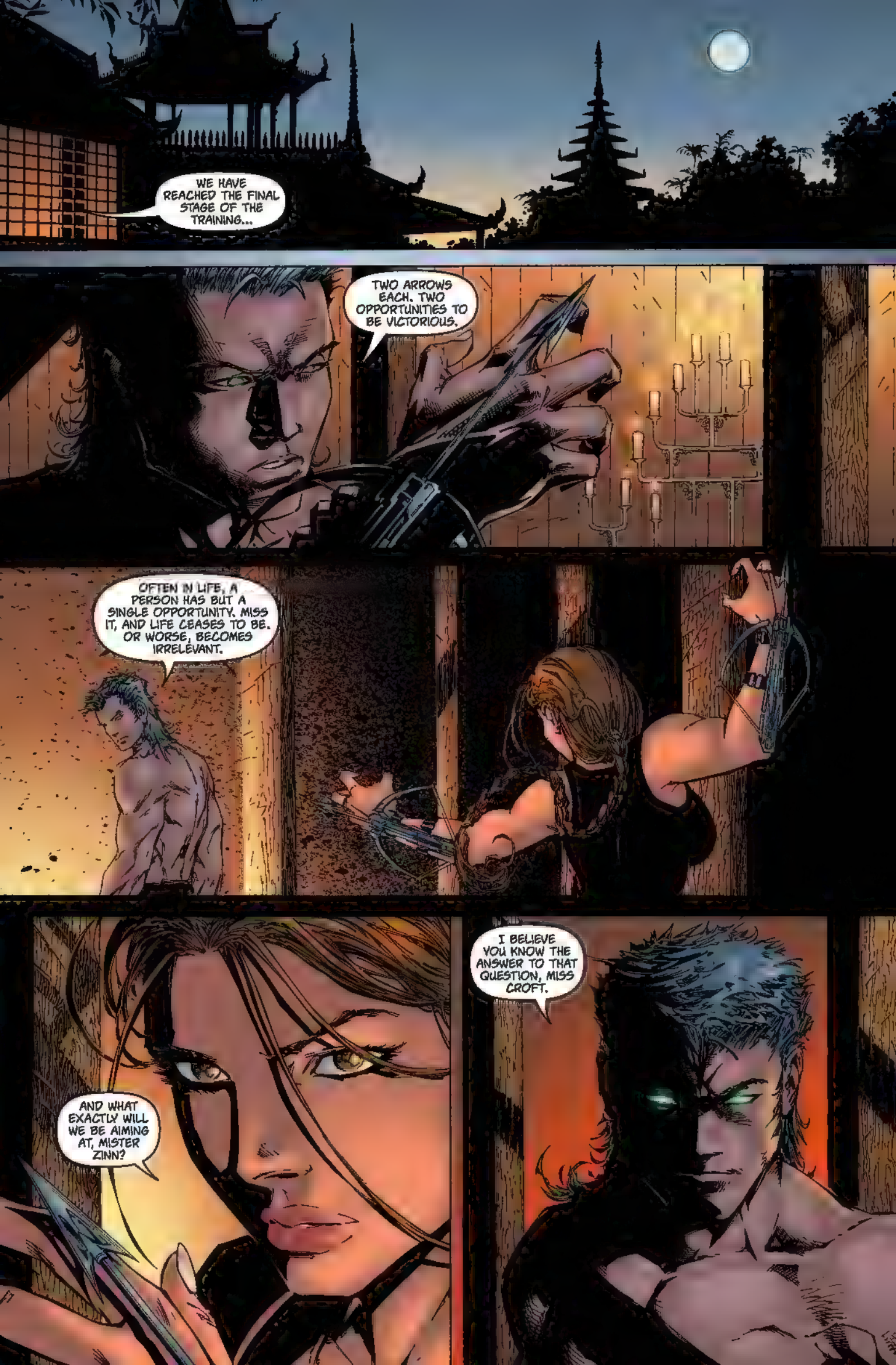
THEY WERE ALL WITH YOU, THE PEOPLE WHO LOVED YOU. YOUR FATHER, YOUR MOTHER, YOUR FIANCE.
AND THEY ALL DIED WHEN THE PLANE CRASHED INTO THE MOUNTAINS. YET YOU SURVIVED.
WHAT WAS IT THAT SPARED YOU? THAT WAS THE QUESTION YOU PONDERED DURING THAT LONELY, TWO WEEK-LONG TREK THROUGH THE WILDERNESS.
WAS IT PROVIDENCE? DESTINY?
FROM THAT POINT ON, YOU KNEW THAT THIS IS HOW IT WOULD BE. YOU WOULD MAKE YOUR WAY THROUGH THE WORLD ALONE. ALONE.
ALWAYS ALONE.


BWOOP!
KRAA ASH!
SUCH FORCE...
WHERE DID IT COME FROM?
IT CAME FROM WITHIN YOU, LARA CROFT.
AND THERE IS A WELL OF POTENTIAL DEEPER WITHIN YOU STILL. ASTONISHING POTENTIAL.
WE NEED ONLY KEEP DIGGING TO REACH IT.
IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS SINCE I BEGAN MY TRAINING. THEY BLUR TOGETHER... LIKE THE MEMORIES IN MY HEAD.
EVEN NOW, I CAN FEEL ZINN SIFTING THROUGH MY MEMORIES, AS IF SEARCHING FOR A KEY TO UNLOCK SOME HIDDEN DOOR.
AND IF HE OPENS THAT DOOR, WHAT WILL HE FIND ON THE OTHER SIDE?
WHAT WILL I FIND?

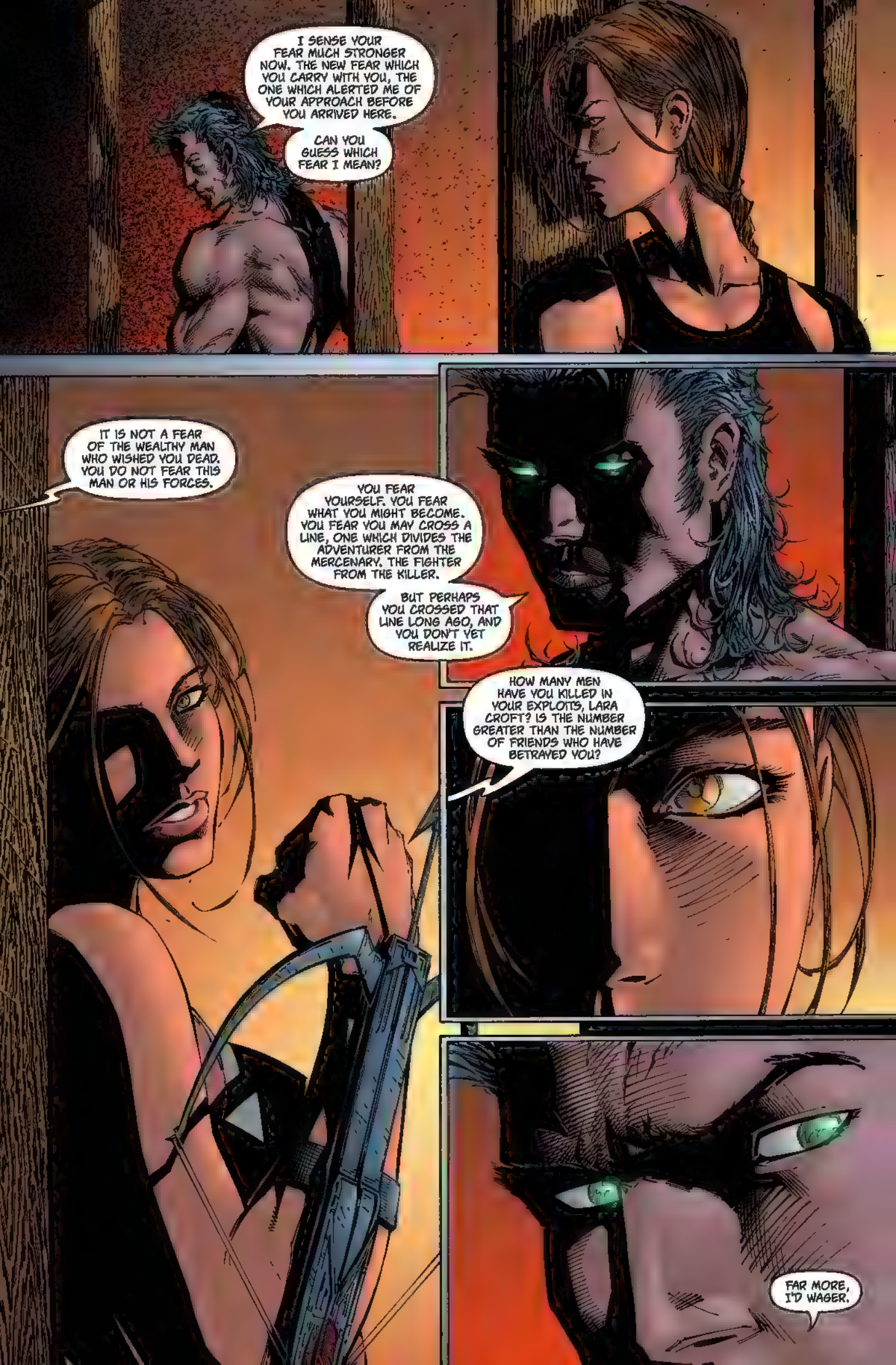

BEAUTIFUL, ARE THEY NOT? CRAFTED BY AN ANCIENT MASTER.
AS DELICATE AS THEY ARE STRONG. A PERFECT BALANCE.
FACING ONE'S ADVERSARY OFFERS ONE A SIMPLE CHOICE. TO LIVE OR DIE.
OFTEN, LIFE IS MORE COMPLICATED.
KHANK!
YOU ARE QUITE ADEPT AT DEFENDING YOURSELF. I SUPPOSE THAT COMES FROM YEARS OF PRACTICE.
DEFENDING YOURSELF NOT ONLY FROM YOUR ENEMIES, BUT FROM FRIENDS AND LOVERS AS WELL.
YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCE, DO YOU NOT, LARA CROFT? THE NEED TO WALK A RAZOR'S EDGE?
I UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD WEAPON, MISTER ZINN.
INDEED? LET US TEST THE DEPTH OF THAT UNDERSTANDING.

MORE THAN YOU'D CARE TO REMEMBER. AND EACH ONE... LIKE A DAGGER TO YOUR HEART.
HOW MANY HAVE BETRAYED YOU?
IT ERODED YOUR TRUST IN PEOPLE. MADE YOU WARY.
BUT IT ALSO MADE YOU STRONG. HARDENED YOU. THERE'S NOTHING STRONGER THAN A HEART OF STONE.
AAAAHH!


TCHNKK!
TCHNNK!
TCHNK!
CHNNKSSH!
I KNEW YOU WERE THE ONE, LARA CROFT. THE ONE I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU HAVE COME HERE TO FULFILL NOT ONLY YOUR DESTINY, BUT MINE AS WELL.
YOU HAVE BEEN WALKING A PATH THAT HAS LED YOU TO ME. WHEN WE HAVE FINISHED, BOTH OF US WILL BE TRANSFORMED.
I THINK I'LL BE GOING NOW, MISTER ZINN.
BUT YOU CANNOT LEAVE. THIS IS THE OPPORTUNITY OF A HUNDRED LIFETIMES.
부전ㅁ자전
ONCE THE TRAINING HAS BEGUN, IT MUST CONTINUE TO THE END.


WE HAVE REACHED THE FINAL STAGE OF THE TRAINING...
TWO ARROWS EACH. TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO BE VICTORIOUS.
OFTEN IN LIFE, A PERSON HAS BUT A SINGLE OPPORTUNITY. MISS IT, AND LIFE CEASES TO BE. OR WORSE, BECOMES IRRELEVANT.
AND WHAT EXACTLY WILL WE BE AIMING AT, MISTER ZINN?
I BELIEVE YOU KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION, MISS CROFT.

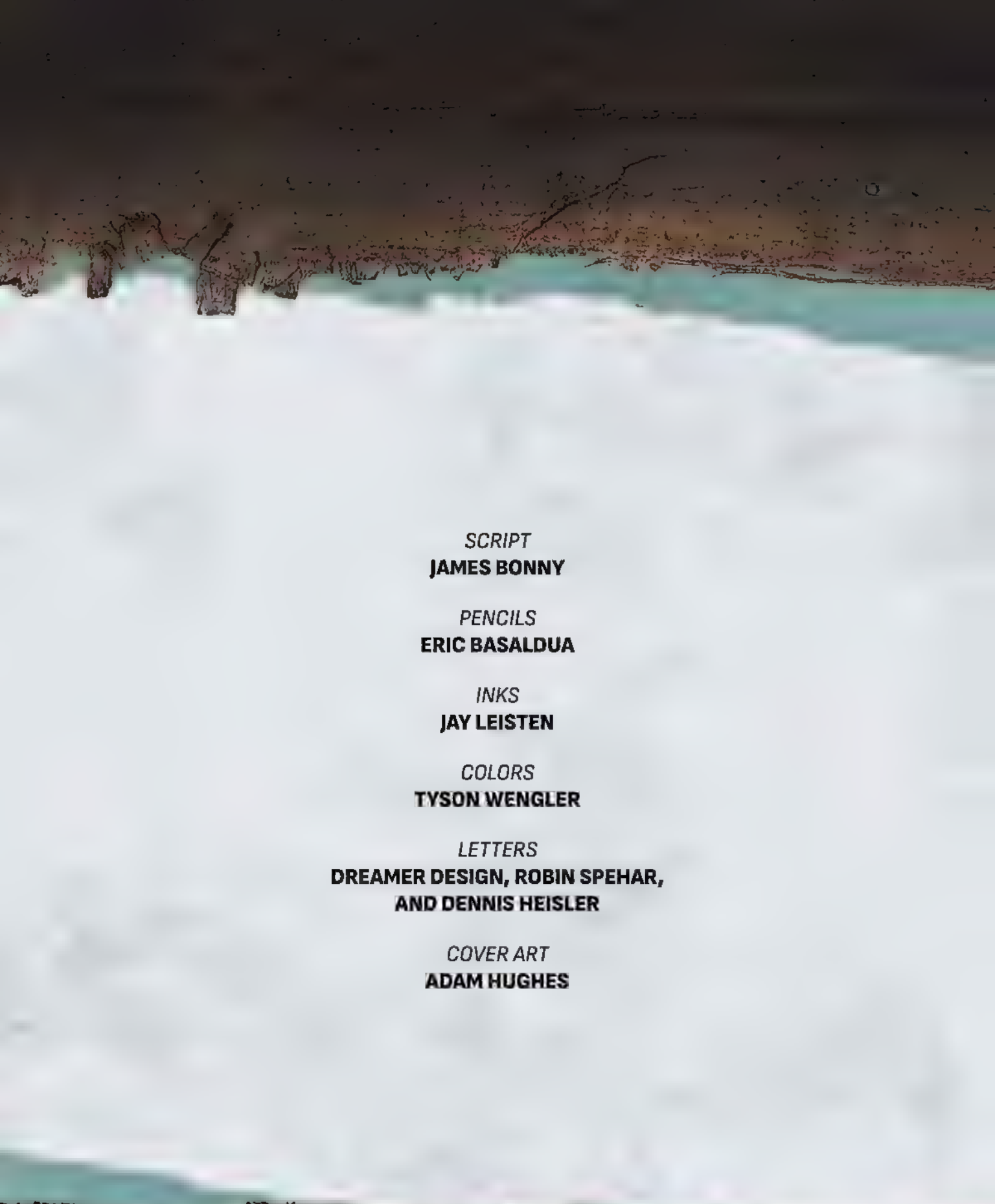
TWAAK!


I SENSE YOUR FEAR MUCH STRONGER NOW. THE NEW FEAR WHICH YOU CARRY WITH YOU, THE ONE WHICH ALERTED ME OF YOUR APPROACH BEFORE YOU ARRIVED HERE.
CAN YOU GUESS WHICH FEAR I MEAN?
IT IS NOT A FEAR OF THE WEALTHY MAN WHO WISHED YOU DEAD. YOU DO NOT FEAR THIS MAN OR HIS FORCES.
YOU FEAR YOURSELF. YOU FEAR WHAT YOU MIGHT BECOME. YOU FEAR YOU MAY CROSS A LINE, ONE WHICH DIVIDES THE ADVENTURER FROM THE MERCENARY. THE FIGHTER FROM THE KILLER.
BUT PERHAPS YOU CROSSED THAT LINE LONG AGO, AND YOU DON'T YET REALIZE IT.
HOW MANY MEN HAVE YOU KILLED IN YOUR EXPLOITS, LARA CROFT? IS THE NUMBER GREATER THAN THE NUMBER OF FRIENDS WHO HAVE BETRAYED YOU?
FAR MORE, I'D WAGER.

WWTCHH!
FWWKSH!
YOU HAVE BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS, LARA CROFT. AND YOU SOUGHT ME OUT TO MAKE YOUR AIM EVEN DEADLIER.
YOU KNEW WHAT I WAS, AND YET YOU CAME TO ME WILLINGLY. WANTING TO BECOME LIKE ME.
YOU'RE WRONG. I DIDN'T COME HERE LOOKING TO KILL. I CAME LOOKING TO SURVIVE.
AND I NEVER WOULD WANT TO BECOME LIKE YOU.

IT'S TOO LATE. YOU ARE MORE LIKE ME THAN YOU REALIZE. THAT IS WHY YOU WERE DRAWN TO ME.
WE ARE LIKE MAGNETIC FORCES, YOU AND I. WE CAN REPEL, OR WE CAN JOIN TOGETHER. WE CAN MERGE OUR ENERGIES, BECOMING ONE INVINCIBLE FORCE. I HAVE FORESEEN THIS.
YOU MAY HAVE FORESEEN IT, MISTER ZINN, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.
YOU HAVE TWO CHOICES, LARA CROFT— JOIN WITH ME... OR DIE.
PERHAPS THERE IS A THIRD OPTION.
WWTCHH!
FFNNCH!
WWZZ!

AHKUHH...
HOW MANY... GASP... HAVE YOU KILLED?
ONLY THOSE WHO WERE TRYING TO KILL ME.
GOOD AND EVIL. ARE THEY OPPOSITE FORCES? OR TWO SIDES OF THE SAME EQUATION?
OR PERHAPS IT'S ALL ABOUT BALANCE.
THE END.



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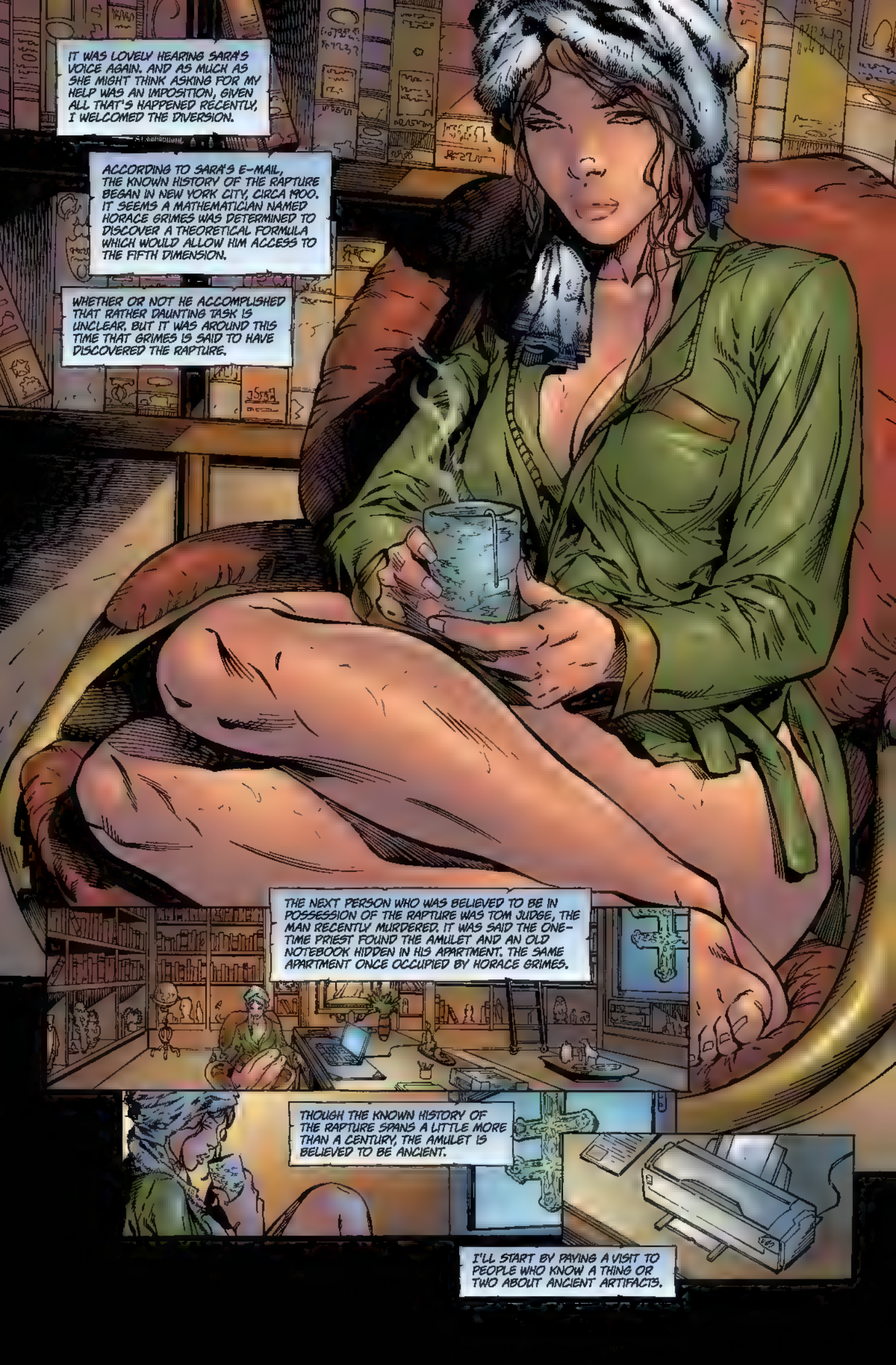
CROFT MANOR, SURREY, ENGLAND.
TO PARAPHRASE AN OLD ADAGE, A LADY'S HOME IS HER CASTLE.
AND SOMETIMES A CASTLE NEEDS TO BE DEFENDED.
AN ATTACK COULD COME AT ANY TIME. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'VE BEEN MARKED FOR DEATH BY ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST MEN ON EARTH.
WHEN IT DOES COME...

RHUMPH!
I'LL BE READY.
WOOMP-FOOPH!
SARA PEZZINI, NEW YORK CITY POLICE DETECTIVE, AND WIELDER OF THE ANCIENT, MYSTICAL WEAPON KNOWN AS THE WITCHBLADE.
BREEPBREEP!
BREEPBREEP!
NOT TO MENTION, A DEAR FRIEND WHO I DON'T HEAR FROM NEARLY AS OFTEN AS I'D LIKE.
WELL, IF THIS ISN'T AN UNEXPECTED TREAT.
YOU MIGHT WANT TO WAIT TO HEAR WHY I CALLED BEFORE MAKING THAT JUDGMENT, LARA.

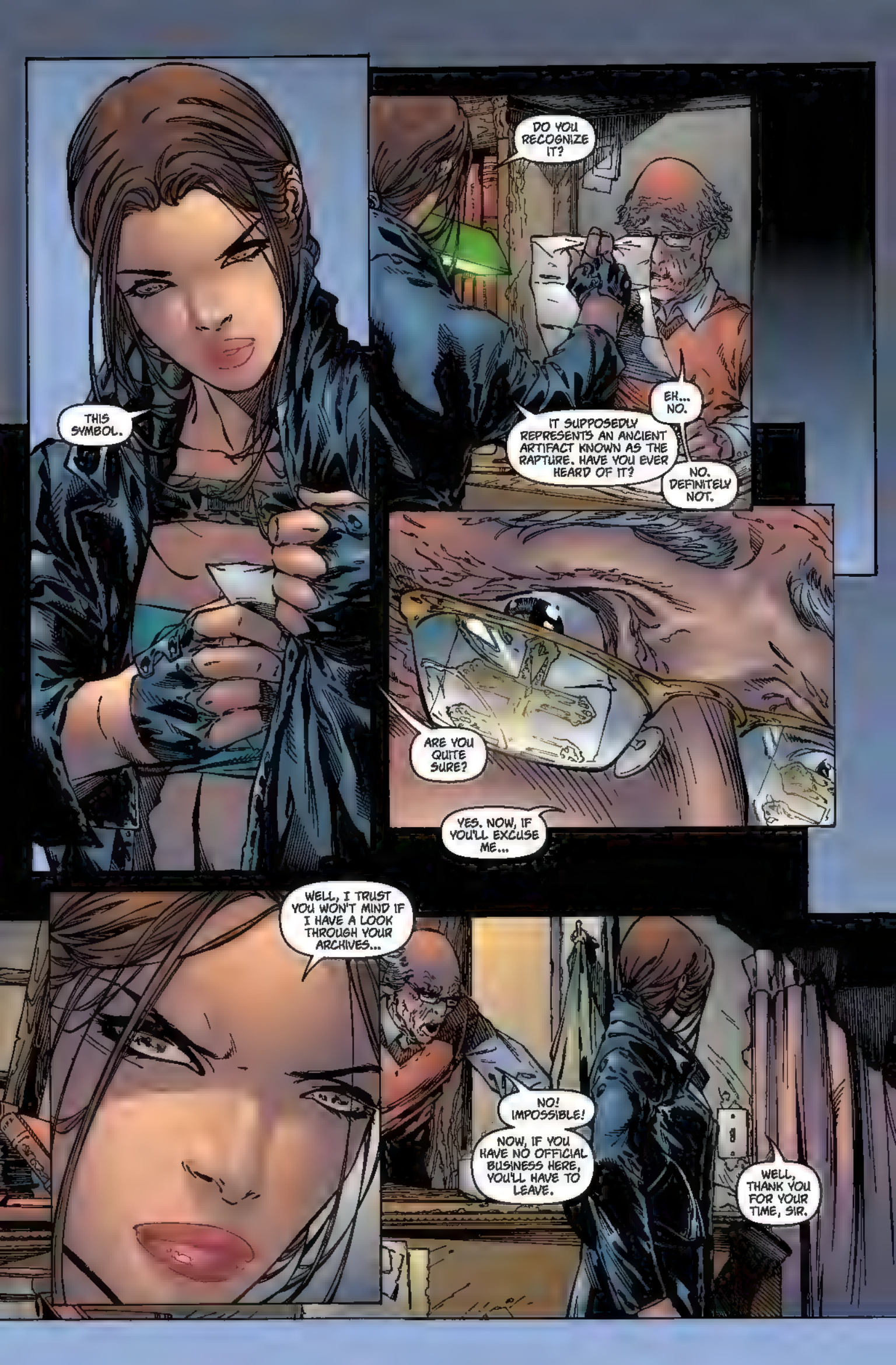
SEEMS A MAN NAMED TOM JUDGE WAS MURDERED. THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT IS, THE GUY USED TO BE A CATHOLIC PRIEST, FELL OFF THE GOD WAGON BIG TIME...
...THEN HE CAME INTO POSSESSION OF AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT KNOWN AS THE RAPTURE.
WHAT'S THE NATURE OF THE ARTIFACT?
SIMPLE. HEAVEN AND HELL.
CHEER UP, PEZZINI. IT'S JUST ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE.
YOU'RE A SAINT, FOLEY.
WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM ME, SARA?
A LITTLE RESEARCH. THE SHAPE OF THE ARTIFACT SEEMS TO HOLD A KEY TO ITS POWER. I'LL E-MAIL IT TO YOU.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN ON MY END. ANY REASON YOU NEED THE EXTRA HELP?
AFRAID I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL HERE. BUSY SEASON.

ANYWAY, I SHOULD HAVE STARTED OUT THIS CONVERSATION BY ASKING HOW YOU'VE BEEN.
OH, LET'S SEE... I'VE BEEN MARKED FOR DEATH BY A RICH INDUSTRIALIST. I FREED HORDES OF TORMENTED SPIRITS FROM A HAUNTED IRISH CASTLE. I TRAINED WITH A DARK MASTER WHO WANTED TO MELD WITH MY ENERGY TO BECOME INVINCIBLE.
ALL IN ALL, HARDLY WORTH MENTIONING.
SOUNDS LIKE, WHEN ALL THIS SHAKES OUT, WE COULD BOTH USE A NICE LONG VACATION TOGETHER.
SPOT ON. I KNOW A BRILLIANT TRAVEL AGENT.
SERIOUSLY, LARA, WITH ALL THAT'S GOING ON...WATCH YOUR BACK.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, LOVE, YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST PERSON TO TELL ME THAT.


IT WAS LOVELY HEARING SARA'S VOICE AGAIN. AND AS MUCH AS SHE MIGHT THINK ASKING FOR MY HELP WAS AN IMPOSITION, GIVEN ALL THAT'S HAPPENED RECENTLY, I WELCOMED THE DIVERSION.
ACCORDING TO SARA'S E-MAIL, THE KNOWN HISTORY OF THE RAPTURE BEGAN IN NEW YORK CITY, CIRCA 1900. IT SEEMS A MATHEMATICIAN NAMED HORACE GRIMES WAS DETERMINED TO DISCOVER A THEORETICAL FORMULA WHICH WOULD ALLOW HIM ACCESS TO THE FIFTH DIMENSION.
WHETHER OR NOT HE ACCOMPLISHED THAT RATHER DAUNTING TASK IS UNCLEAR. BUT IT WAS AROUND THIS TIME THAT GRIMES IS SAID TO HAVE DISCOVERED THE RAPTURE.
THE NEXT PERSON WHO WAS BELIEVED TO BE IN POSSESSION OF THE RAPTURE WAS TOM JUDGE, THE MAN RECENTLY MURDERED. IT WAS SAID THE ONE-TIME PRIEST FOUND THE AMULET AND AN OLD NOTEBOOK HIDDEN IN HIS APARTMENT. THE SAME APARTMENT ONCE OCCUPIED BY HORACE GRIMES.
THOUGH THE KNOWN HISTORY OF THE RAPTURE SPANS A LITTLE MORE THAN A CENTURY, THE AMULET IS BELIEVED TO BE ANCIENT.
I'LL START BY PAYING A VISIT TO PEOPLE WHO KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT ANCIENT ARTIFACTS.

ROME, ITALY.
VROOOMMM!
THE SANCTUM ARCHIVES, A DEPOSITORY FOR RARE AND ANCIENT TEXTS, PRIMARILY DEALING WITH THE MYSTICAL REALM.
BOOKS
WE'RE OPEN

EXCUSE ME, SIR...
WELCOME TO THE SANCTUM ARCHIVES, SIGNORINA. HOW MAY I ASSIST YOU?
I'M LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT A SYMBOL.
SYMBOL? WHAT SYMBOL DO YOU MEAN?


THIS SYMBOL.
DO YOU RECOGNIZE IT?
EH... NO.
IT SUPPOSEDLY REPRESENTS AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT KNOWN AS THE RAPTURE. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF IT?
NO. DEFINITELY NOT.
ARE YOU QUITE SURE?
YES. NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...
WELL, I TRUST YOU WON'T MIND IF I HAVE A LOOK THROUGH YOUR ARCHIVES...
NO! IMPOSSIBLE!
NOW, IF YOU HAVE NO OFFICIAL BUSINESS HERE, YOU'LL HAVE TO LEAVE.
WELL, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, SIR.

UNLESS MY INSTINCTS ARE COMPLETELY WRONG, I'D SAY THAT MAN IS HIDING SOMETHING. I COULD PRACTICALLY SMELL HIS FEAR WHEN I SHOWED HIM THE SYMBOL.
BUT WHEN YOU REACH A DEAD END, YOU HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER PATH.
FORTUNATELY, I ALREADY HAVE ANOTHER PATH IN MIND.
VROOMMM!

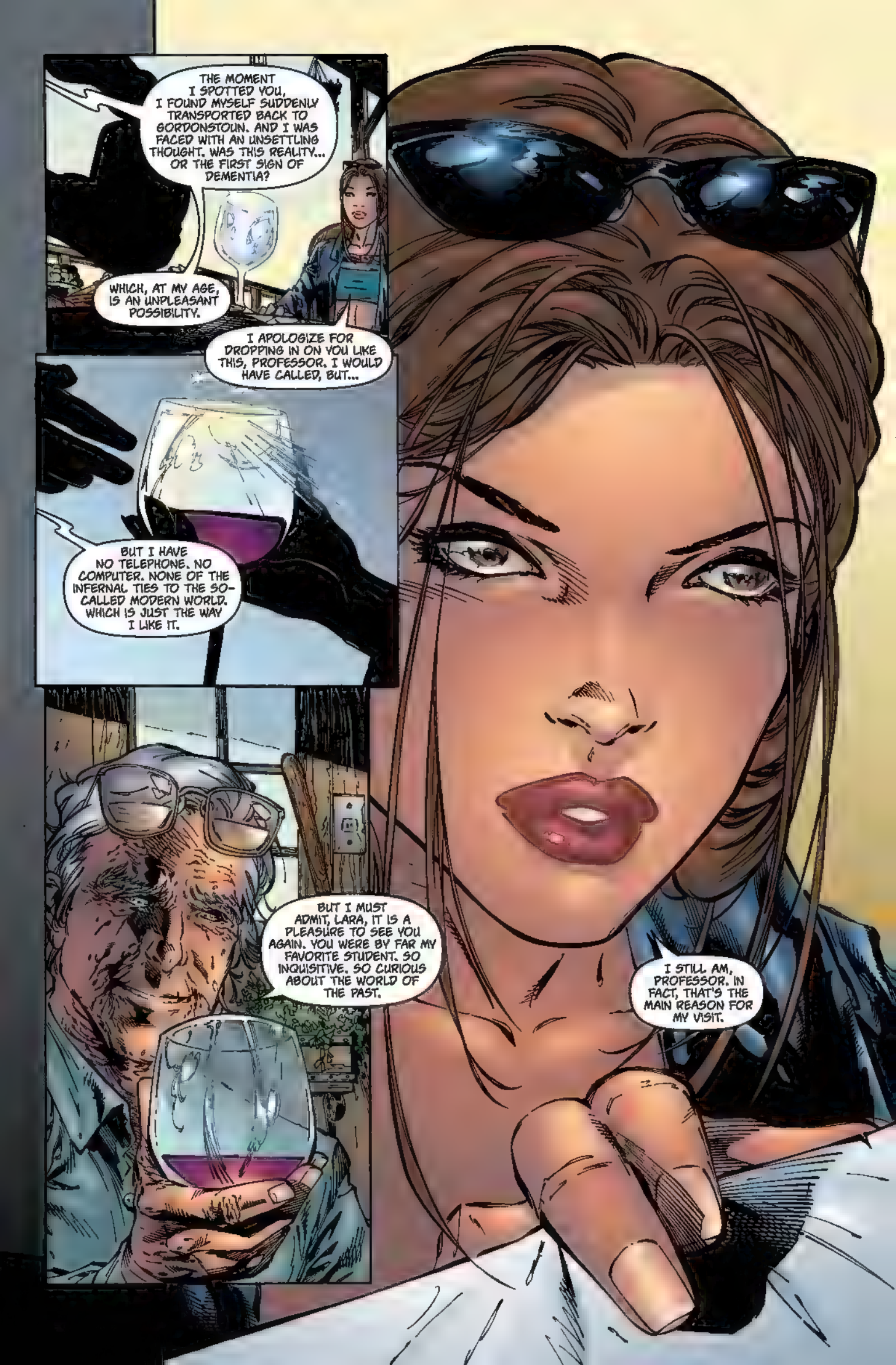
(SHE HAD THE SYMBOL! SHE KNEW THE NAME!)
VA-VASH!
PAWWKK!
THUNKK!
PAWKK!
THUNKKGH!
CLK!
CLAK!
CLK!

PHPP!
PHPP!
PHPP!
WWWHWHH!

WE HAVE THE FIRST KEY.

VATICAN CITY.
WHEN DID THIS OCCUR?
LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO, SEXTON.
VERY TROUBLING, INDEED.
THAT CURSED BOOK SHOULD HAVE BEEN DESTROYED LONG AGO. OR AT LEAST LOCKED AWAY HERE IN THE DEEPEST VAULT.
THE BOOK CANNOT EXIST ON HOLY GROUND. AND TO DESTROY IT WOULD PRODUCE A HOST OF NEW PROBLEMS. WITH ITS EXISTENCE, THERE IS BALANCE.
AND NOW IT'S BEEN STOLEN, SEXTON. SO WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT IT?
WE ARE GOING TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION...
...IN THE HARSHEST METHODS.

WHEN I WAS A SCHOOLGIRL ATTENDING GORDONSTOUN, MY FAVORITE INSTRUCTOR WAS PROFESSOR ROBERT DREW.
HE SPECIALIZED IN THE STUDY OF ANCIENT CULTURES.
PROFESSOR DREW MADE THE PAST TRULY COME ALIVE IN HIS LECTURES. AS IF WHAT CAME BEFORE WASN'T DEAD AND TURNED TO DUST, BUT SOMEHOW EXISTED ALONGSIDE US.
IT WASN'T UNTIL MUCH LATER THAT I LEARNED PROFESSOR DREW WAS IN FACT THE WORLD'S PREEMINENT SCHOLAR IN THE FIELD OF ANCIENT CULTURES.
PROFESSOR DREW COULD HAVE TAUGHT AT ANY UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD. HE COULD HAVE PUBLISHED BOOKS, OR LECTURED TO PACKED HALLS.
BUT THE GOOD PROFESSOR PREFERRED A SIMPLER LIFE.


THE MOMENT I SPOTTED YOU, I FOUND MYSELF SUDDENLY TRANSPORTED BACK TO GORDONSTOUN. AND I WAS FACED WITH AN UNSETTLING THOUGHT. WAS THIS REALITY... OR THE FIRST SIGN OF DEMENTIA?
WHICH, AT MY AGE, IS AN UNPLEASANT POSSIBILITY.
I APOLOGIZE FOR DROPPING IN ON YOU LIKE THIS, PROFESSOR. I WOULD HAVE CALLED, BUT...
BUT I HAVE NO TELEPHONE. NO COMPUTER. NONE OF THE INFERNAL TIES TO THE SO-CALLED MODERN WORLD. WHICH IS JUST THE WAY I LIKE IT.
BUT I MUST ADMIT, LARA, IT IS A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN. YOU WERE BY FAR MY FAVORITE STUDENT. SO INQUISITIVE. SO CURIOUS ABOUT THE WORLD OF THE PAST.
I STILL AM, PROFESSOR. IN FACT, THAT'S THE MAIN REASON FOR MY VISIT.

WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
IT'S A SYMBOL.
YES, I CAN SEE THAT. BUT A SYMBOL OF WHAT, I WONDER?
SUPPOSEDLY AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT KNOWN AS THE RAPTURE.
WELL THEN, WHAT YOU HAVE HERE IS THE SYMBOL OF A MYTH, MY DEAR.
I BEG YOUR PARDON?
I BELIEVE THE TERM "URBAN LEGEND" WOULD BEST SUIT. ALTHOUGH THIS IS AN URBAN LEGEND WHICH STRETCHES BACK MANY, MANY CENTURIES.
IN ITS PHYSICAL FORM, THE RAPTURE WAS SAID TO EXIST AS AN ARCANE AMULET. A DARK VERSION OF THE HOLY GRAIL, IF YOU WILL, SOUGHT AFTER BY ALCHEMISTS, PRACTITIONERS OF THE BLACK ARTS, AND COUNTLESS CRACKPOTS OVER THE AGES.
BUT WHY WAS IT SOUGHT AFTER?
BECAUSE IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THE RAPTURE ALLOWED ITS BEARER TO TRAVEL INTO OTHER DIMENSIONS.
EVEN HELL ITSELF.
BUT THERE ARE ALSO LEGENDS THAT TELL OF THE RAPTURE OFFERING THE POWER OF HOPE. SO IT EXISTS IN AN ETERNAL BALANCE— SOMEWHERE BETWEEN HOPE AND HELL.
BUT, OF COURSE, IT'S ALL A MYTH.
EXPECTING VISITORS, PROFESSOR?
NOT FOR YEARS.

PROFESSOR ROBERT DREW, I PRESUME?
A CORRECT PRESUMPTION. AND WHO ARE YOU?
THE NAME'S DELARCH. CARLOS DELARCH. THESE ARE MY ASSOCIATES, MISS FAWN AND MISS LACEY. WE WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE YOU TO COME WITH US.
THAT'S ABSURD. COME WITH YOU WHERE?
I AM BADLY IN NEED OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE, PROFESSOR. I AM SEARCHING FOR AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT KNOWN AS THE RAPTURE. IF YOU WILL AGREE TO ASSIST ME IN MY ENDEAVOR, YOU WILL BE HANDSOMELY COMPENSATED.
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE. AND I'D LIKE YOU TO LEAVE, SIR.
I THINK YOU NEED TO RECONSIDER YOUR POSITION, PROFESSOR. FOR YOUR SAKE.
YOU HEARD THE PROFESSOR.
WHOEVER YOU ARE, THIS DOESN'T CONCERN YOU.
I'M LARA CROFT, AND I'M MAKING IT MY CONCERN.
THAT WOULD BE A GREAT MISTAKE ON YOUR PART, MISS CROFT.

STAND BACK, PROFESSOR.

TWO AGAINST ONE?

SEEMS FAIR.

THWAK!

THWAM!

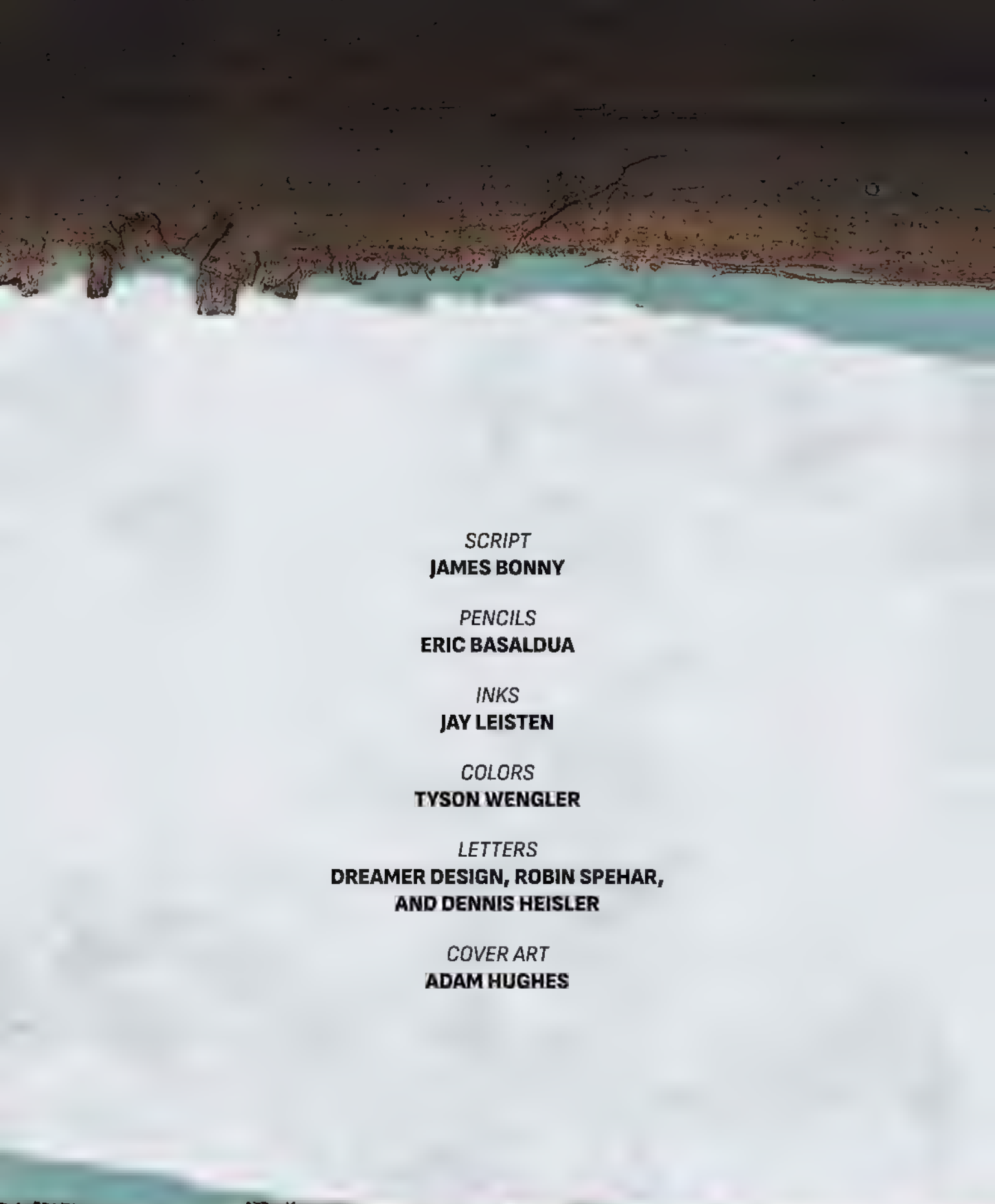
ENOUGH OF THIS FOOLISHNESS.

I QUITE AGREE.
VAAVAAASH!
VOOOSH!
LARA...?
BWOOF!
PROFESSOR...?
PROFESSOR!

SARA TOLD ME TO WATCH MY BACK. I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO HER.
HAVING KIDNAPPED PROFESSOR DREW, THE COMPETITION HAD A LEG UP ON ME. I CAN'T LET THEM GET TO THE RAPTURE FIRST.
WOOMPH! WOOMPH!
WHAT'S THIS?
KVUM! KVUM! KVUM!
VUMPH!
WAS THIS MORE COMPETITION?

MOVE... AND DIE.
OR SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY?
NEXT ISSUE: LARA CROFT VS. the Magdalena

AH!



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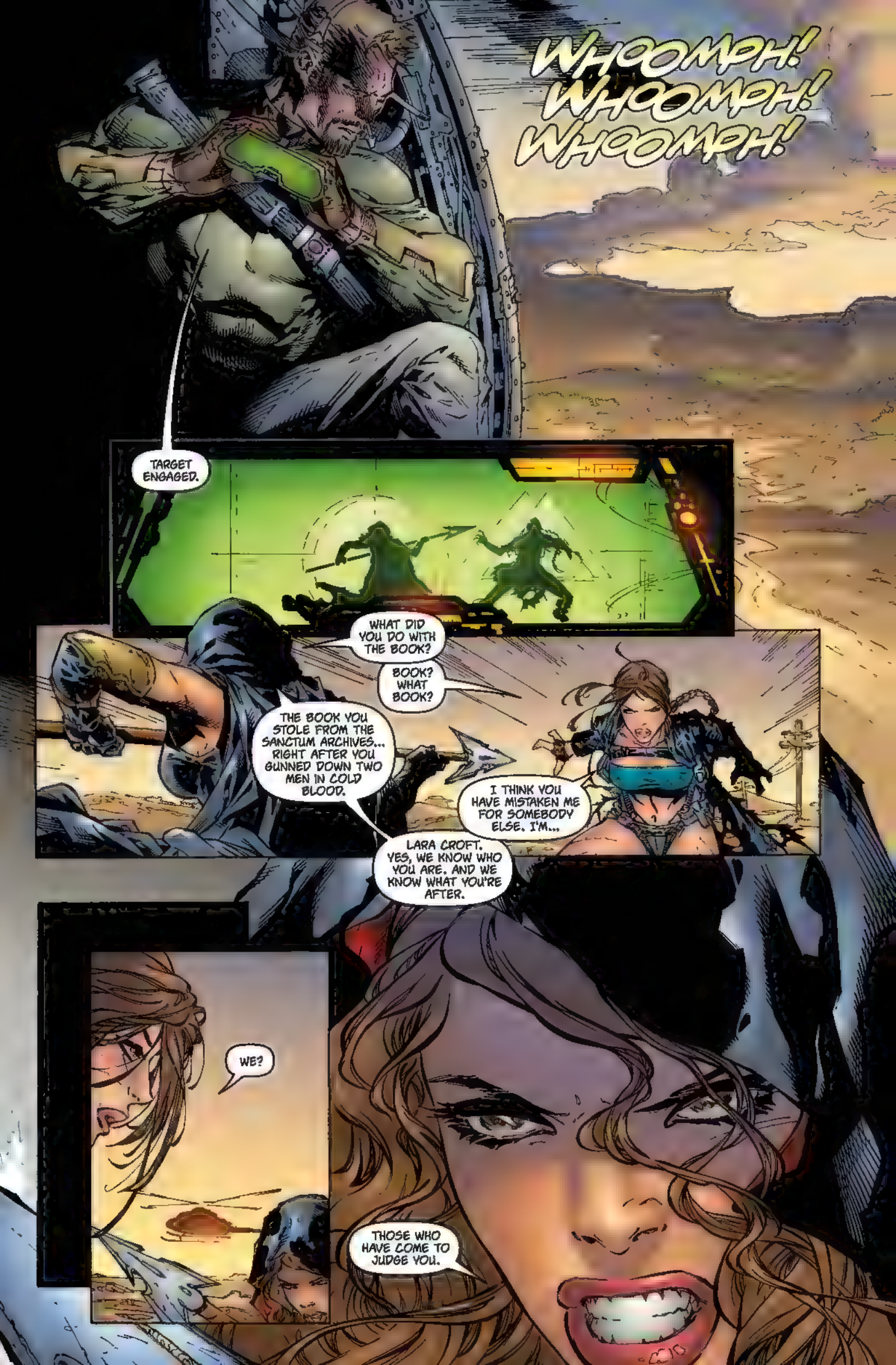
I CAME TO ITALY IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS.
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS, WHICH I HAD YET TO FULLY UNDERSTAND.
THE QUESTIONS CONCERNED AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT KNOWN AS THE RAPTURE, WHICH HAD SUPPOSEDLY BEEN IN THE POSSESSION OF A MAN NAMED TOM JUDGE. BUT SINCE HIS MURDER IN NEW YORK CITY, THE ARTIFACT WAS MISSING.
OR PERHAPS IT HAD NEVER EXISTED IN THE FIRST PLACE.
I CAME HERE FOR ANSWERS, BUT FOUND ONLY MORE QUESTIONS.
THE BIGGEST QUESTION FOR ME AT THE MOMENT BEING...
WHO ON EARTH IS THIS?


WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
TARGET ENGAGED.
WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE BOOK?
BOOK? WHAT BOOK?
THE BOOK YOU STOLE FROM THE SANCTUM ARCHIVES... RIGHT AFTER YOU GUNNED DOWN TWO MEN IN COLD BLOOD.
I THINK YOU HAVE MISTAKEN ME FOR SOMEBODY ELSE. I'M...
LARA CROFT. YES, WE KNOW WHO YOU ARE. AND WE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AFTER.
WE?
THOSE WHO HAVE COME TO JUDGE YOU.

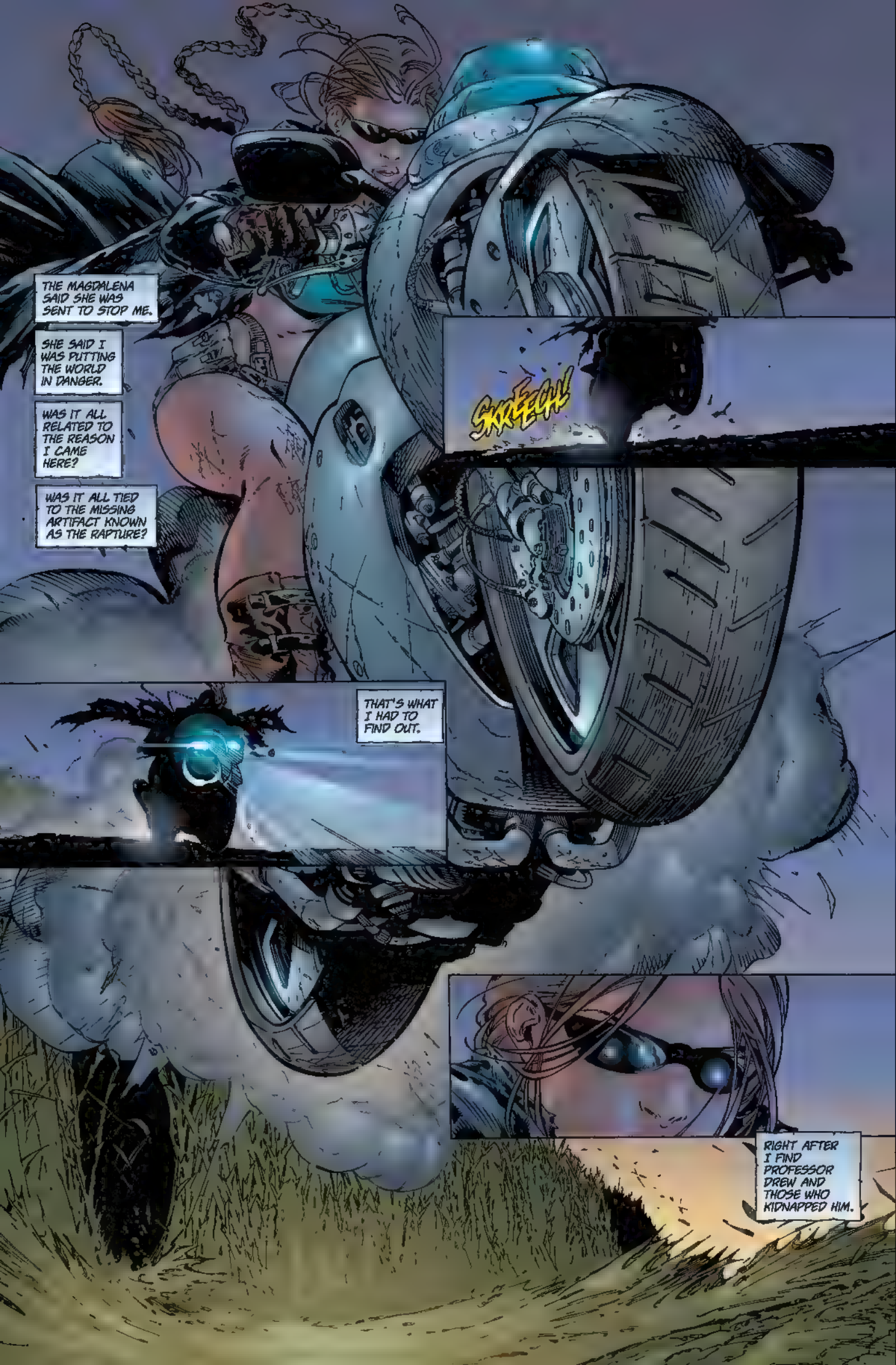
ALL RIGHT, SO YOU KNOW WHO I AM. BUT WHO ARE YOU?
THE MAGDALENA.
I'M GUESSING THAT'S NOT YOUR NAME.
IT'S WHO I AM.
I'M GOING TO TRY TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND. I WAS HERE VISITING A FRIEND OF MINE, PROFESSOR ROBERT DREW, WHEN HE WAS SUDDENLY ABDUCTED BY A MAN AND TWO WOMEN.
I WAS PURSUING THEM WHEN YOU HIT ME WITH THAT...
...SPEAR.
IT LOOKS ANCIENT.
THE SPEAR TRANSCENDS TIME. IT TRANSCENDS THIS WORLD. IT IS A HOLY RELIC, AN INSTRUMENT OF HEAVEN ON EARTH.
LOOK, WHOEVER YOU ARE...
I'M THE MAGDALENA. AND I'M HERE TO STOP YOU.
YOU'RE STOPPING ME FROM SAVING AN INNOCENT MAN'S LIFE. IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE HERE TO DO? IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO?

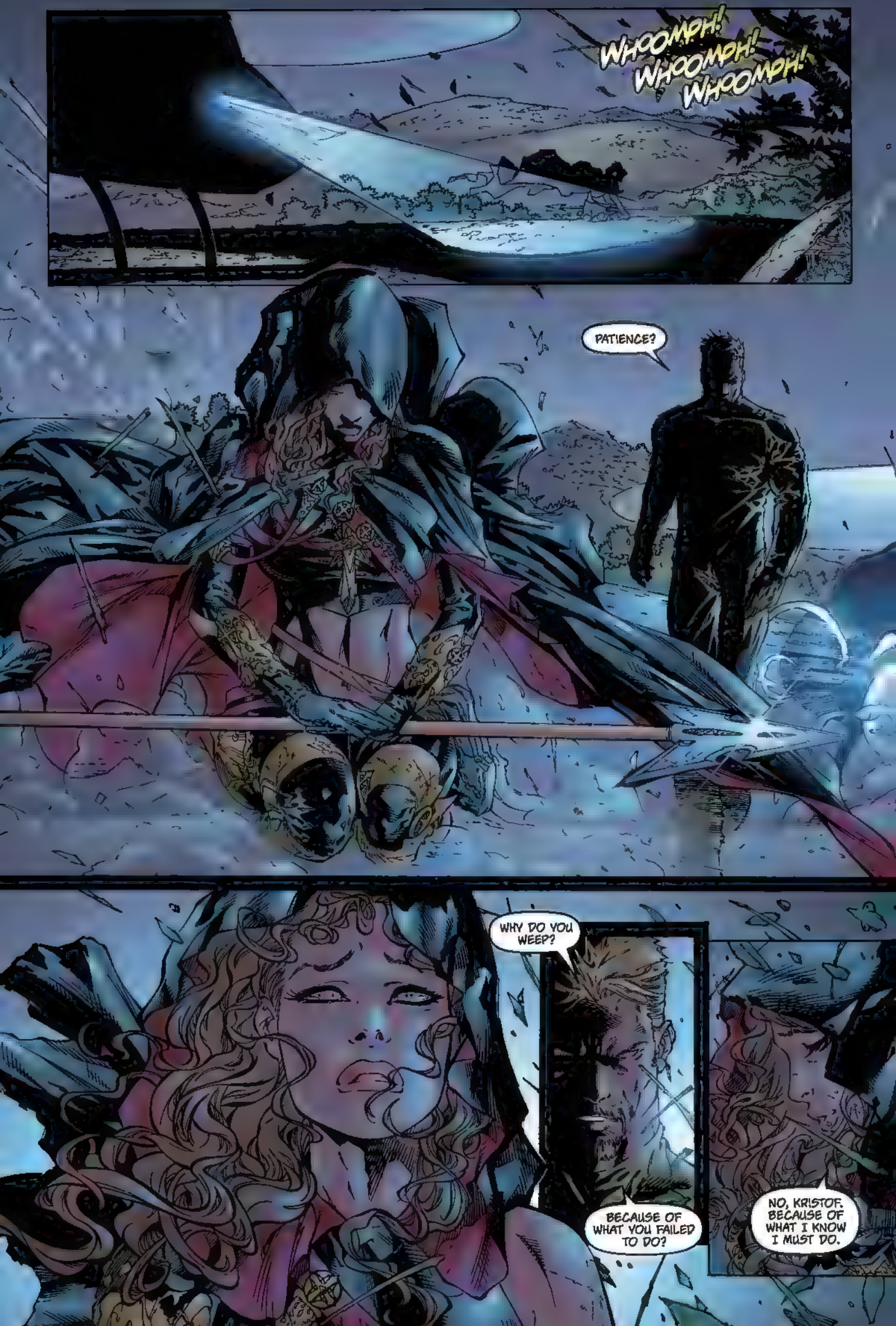
WHAT... DID YOU DO?
I PEERED INTO YOUR HEART.
AND WHAT DID YOU SEE?
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
BECAUSE I'VE BEEN SENT TO STOP YOU.
YOU HAVEN'T STOPPED ME. YOU'VE MERELY DELAYED ME.
NOW I'M GOING AFTER MY FRIEND. HE'S IN DANGER.
YOU COULD BE PUTTING THE WORLD IN DANGER!
TWUMP!
I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU.
I'M NOT DOING WHAT I WANT TO DO.
I'M DOING WHAT I HAVE TO DO.

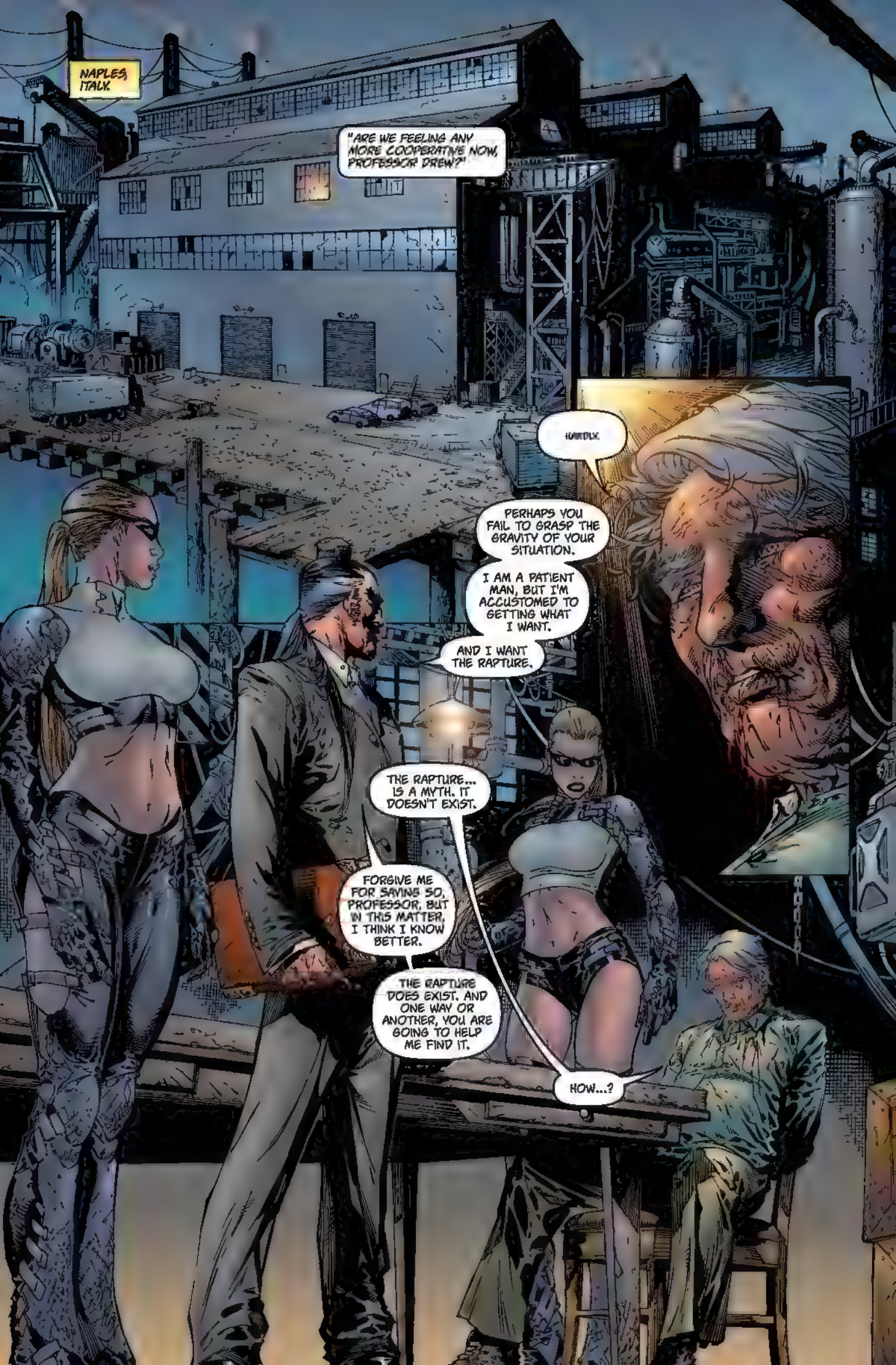
WOOSSH!
THE SPEAR!
THWAM!
THWAM!
I DON'T NEED THE SPEAR TO DEFEAT YOU.
I'VE BEEN TRAINED TO BATTLE EVIL IN ALL ITS FORMS...
PHUMPH!
THEN I SUGGEST YOU GO FIND SOME!

BRRRROOM!
TARGET ON THE MOVE!
IT APPEARS THOSE WHO HAVE COME TO JUDGE ME DON'T GIVE UP EASILY.
LOWER!
ANY SHELTER IN A STORM.

WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
VRROOOM!
CA-CHOW!
CA-CHOW!
CA-CHOW!
TAKE US BACK.
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!


THE MAGDALENA SAID SHE WAS SENT TO STOP ME.
SHE SAID I WAS PUTTING THE WORLD IN DANGER.
WAS IT ALL RELATED TO THE REASON I CAME HERE?
WAS IT ALL TIED TO THE MISSING ARTIFACT KNOWN AS THE RAPTURE?
SKREECH!
THAT'S WHAT I HAD TO FIND OUT.
RIGHT AFTER I FIND PROFESSOR DREW AND THOSE WHO KIDNAPPED HIM.


WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
PATIENCE?
WHY DO YOU WEEP?
BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU FAILED TO DO?
NO, KRISTOF. BECAUSE OF WHAT I KNOW I MUST DO.


NAPLES, ITALY.
"ARE WE FEELING ANY MORE COOPERATIVE NOW, PROFESSOR DREW?"
HARDLY.
PERHAPS YOU FAIL TO GRASP THE GRAVITY OF YOUR SITUATION.
I AM A PATIENT MAN, BUT I'M ACCUSTOMED TO GETTING WHAT I WANT.
AND I WANT THE RAPTURE.
THE RAPTURE... IS A MYTH. IT DOESN'T EXIST.
FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING SO, PROFESSOR, BUT IN THIS MATTER, I THINK I KNOW BETTER.
THE RAPTURE DOES EXIST. AND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, YOU ARE GOING TO HELP ME FIND IT.
HOW...?

WITH THIS BOOK. IT IS AN ANCIENT TEXT, PENNED IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY BY A MONK, WHO WAS BELIEVED AT THE TIME TO BE QUITE MAD. IT WAS EVEN WHISPERED BY SOME THAT HE HAD VISITED HELL.
HE MET QUITE AN UNPLEASANT END AT THE HANDS OF AN AGENT DISPATCHED BY THE HOLY CHURCH.
YET HIS LEGACY ENDURED IN THE FORM OF THIS BOOK. AND WITH THIS BOOK, YOU WILL FIND THE CLUES WHICH WILL LEAD ME TO THE RAPTURE.
THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, YOU SAY?
WOOSH!
WAASH!
DON'T DISAPPOINT ME, PROFESSOR.

"CARLOS DELARCH, MISS CROFT, IS A VERY DANGEROUS CHARACTER, INDEED."
BORN IN MADRID IN 1947, DELARCH BECAME A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE EUROPEAN UNDERWORLD IN THE LATE SIXTIES AND EARLY SEVENTIES.
HE WAS BEHIND THE KILLINGS OF MANY EQUALLY UNSAVORY FIGURES, AND HE WAS ALSO LINKED TO THE 1981 ASSASSINATION OF EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT.
SINCE THEN, DELARCH HAS BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL ARMS SMUGGLER WHO'S HAD BUSINESS DEALINGS WITH REBEL GROUPS AND TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.
THEN WHY IS HE STILL A FREE MAN, INSPECTOR CASTLEBERRY?
DELARCH HAS BEEN ON INTERPOL'S MOST WANTED LIST FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS, YET HE'S ALWAYS MANAGED TO ELUDE MANHUNTS AND EVADE ARREST.
SOME BELIEVE THIS HAS TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT DELARCH DABBLES IN THE OCCULT.
FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN, DELARCH HAS PROGRESSED BEYOND MERE DABBLING.
THERE IS AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT DELARCH WAS SPOTTED IN NAPLES THREE WEEKS AGO.
WELL, SINCE I'M HERE IN ITALY, AND SINCE NAPLES IS LOVELY THIS TIME OF YEAR, I'LL SEE IF I CAN'T CONFIRM THAT FOR MYSELF.
YOU'D BE WISE TO PROCEED WITH CAUTION, MISS CROFT...
AS I SAID, CARLOS DELARCH IS A VERY DANGEROUS CHARACTER.
HE ISN'T THE ONLY ONE, INSPECTOR.

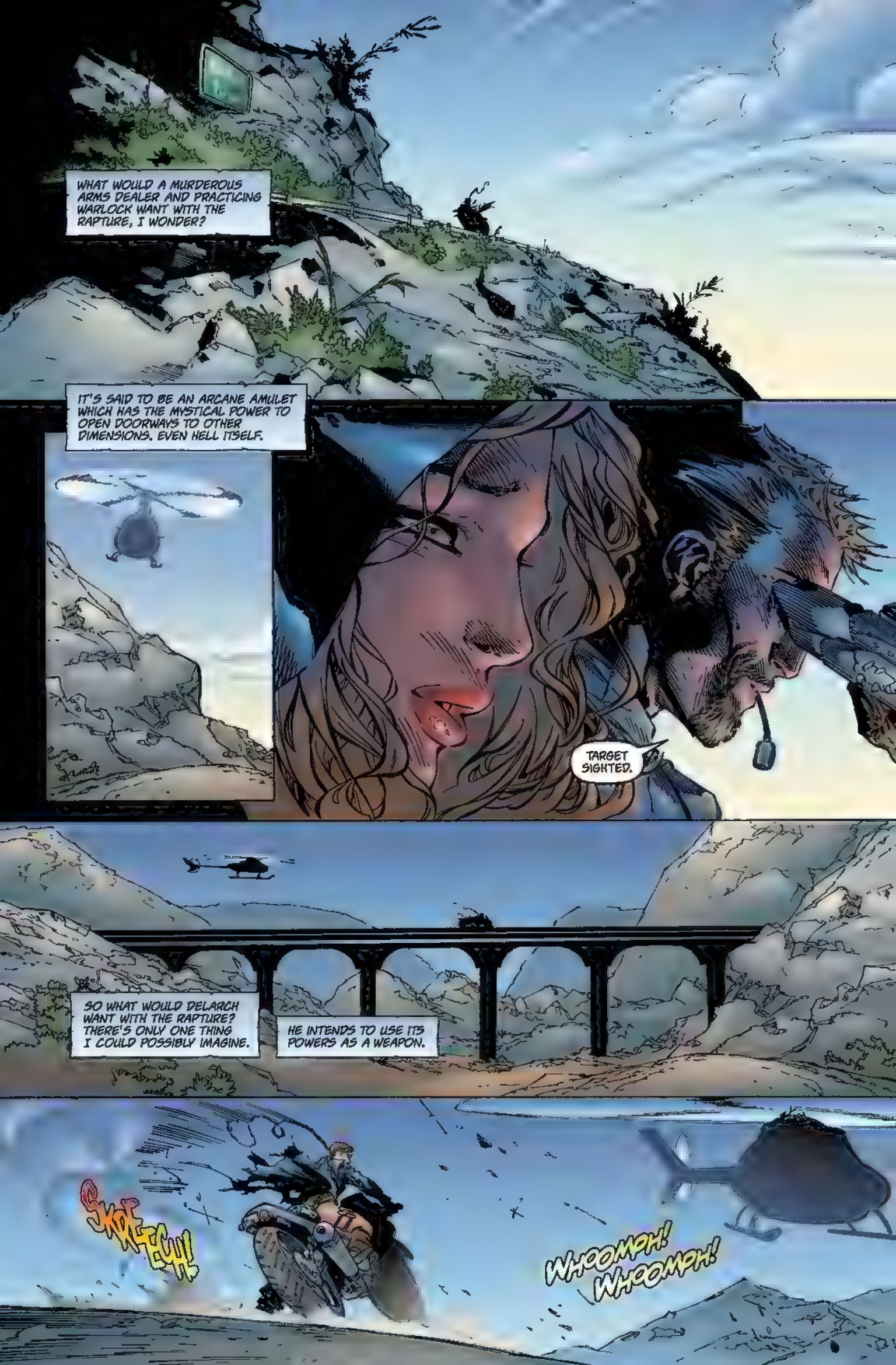
MALTA.
"THE RADIUS IS FAR TOO NARROW. THE TARGET WAS ON THE MOVE."

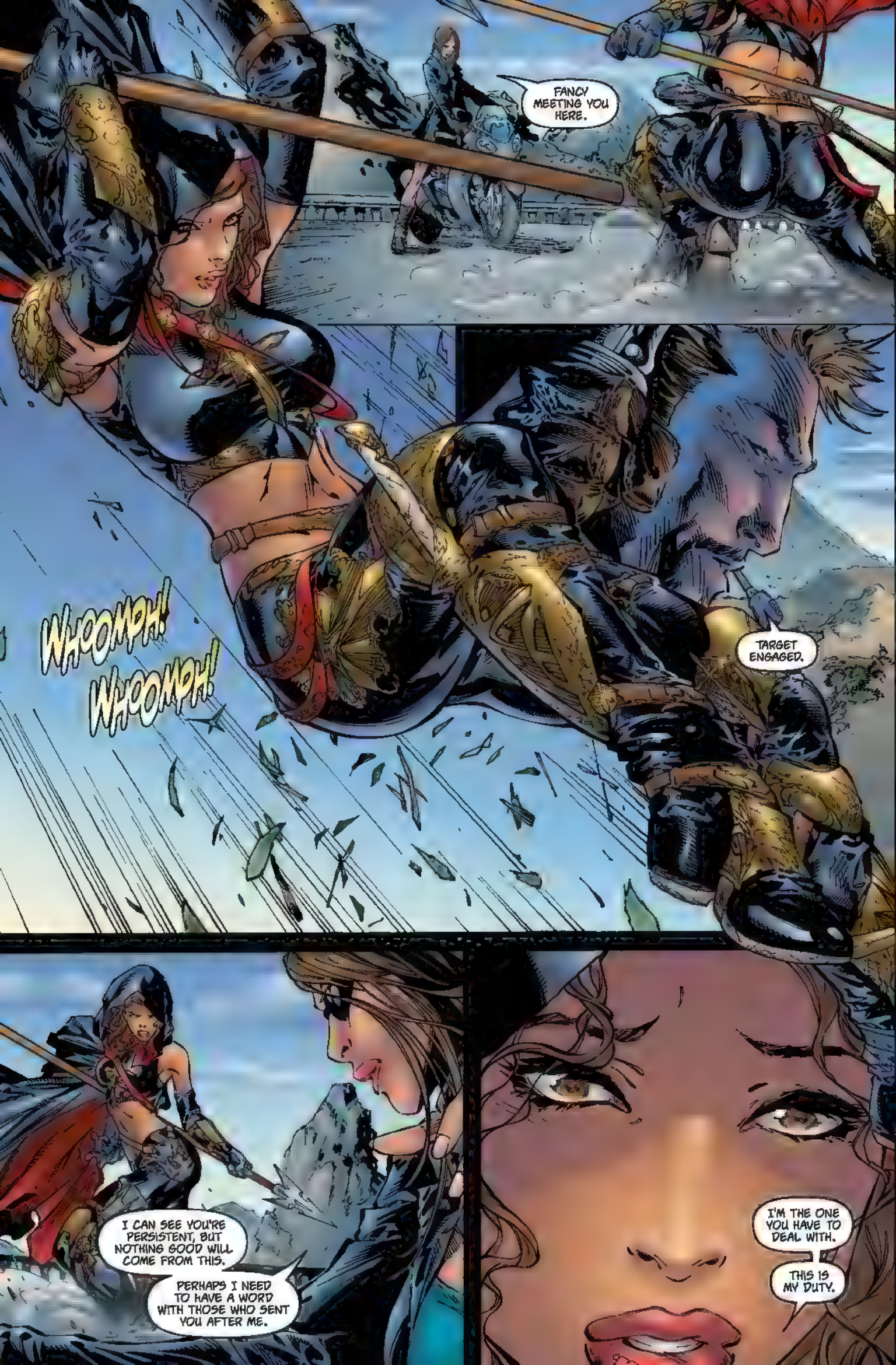
YOU'VE GOT TO EXPAND THE RADIUS.
IF THE SEERS WIDEN THE RADIUS, IT WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO SPOT THE TARGET'S LIFE SIGNS.
AT THIS POINT, THE TARGET COULD BE OUT OF THE COUNTRY ENTIRELY...
LEAVE THIS JOB TO THE EXPERTS, KRISTOF. CONCENTRATE ON YOUR OWN CHARGE. I FEEL SHE NEEDS YOUR GUIDANCE.

VERY WELL. ALERT ME WHEN THE TARGET HAS BEEN SPOTTED.

PATIENCE?

THE SEERS ARE SEARCHING FOR THE LOCATION OF THE TARGET. YOU MUST BE READY TO MOVE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.
SHE HAS A NAME, YOU KNOW.
EXCUSE ME?
THE TARGET... SHE HAS A NAME.
IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU DIDN'T PERSONALIZE THIS MATTER, PATIENCE. THE TARGET IS A DANGEROUS THING, WHICH NEEDS TO BE DEALT WITH.
IS THAT HOW I SHOULD THINK OF HER, KRISTOF? AS A *THING*? A POISONOUS BUG THAT SHOULD BE SQUASHED?
SHE'S SEARCHING FOR THE RAPTURE. IF SHE FINDS IT... IT COULD VERY WELL BE THE BEGINNING OF THE END. THE AUGURIES HAVE FORESEEN THIS.
AND THAT JUSTIFIES KILLING HER?
SHE'S KILLED ALREADY, PATIENCE. THE TWO MEN GUNNED DOWN AT THE SANCTUM ARCHIVES...
EVEN A PURE HEART CAN BE A DANGEROUS VESSEL.
THERE ARE STILL MANY THINGS YOU DO NOT YET COMPREHEND, PATIENCE. BUT WITH MY GUIDANCE, YOU WILL IN TIME.
SHE TOLD ME SHE DIDN'T DO IT.
AND I BELIEVE HER.
I LOOKED INTO HER HEART, KRISTOF. I SAW NO EVIL THERE. SHE'S STRUGGLING TO STAY ON THE RIGHT PATH, JUST AS WE ALL ARE.
THE SEERS HAVE SPOTTED THE TARGET...
IT'S HEADING TOWARD NAPLES.


WHAT WOULD A MURDEROUS ARMS DEALER AND PRACTICING WARLOCK WANT WITH THE RAPTURE, I WONDER?
IT'S SAID TO BE AN ARCANE AMULET WHICH HAS THE MYSTICAL POWER TO OPEN DOORWAYS TO OTHER DIMENSIONS. EVEN HELL ITSELF.
TARGET SIGHTED.
SO WHAT WOULD DELARCH WANT WITH THE RAPTURE? THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I COULD POSSIBLY IMAGINE.
HE INTENDS TO USE ITS POWERS AS A WEAPON.
SKREECH!
WHOOMPH! WHOOMPH!


FANCY MEETING YOU HERE.
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
TARGET ENGAGED.
I CAN SEE YOU'RE PERSISTENT, BUT NOTHING GOOD WILL COME FROM THIS.
PERHAPS I NEED TO HAVE A WORD WITH THOSE WHO SENT YOU AFTER ME.
I'M THE ONE YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH.
THIS IS MY DUTY.

I COULD SEE THE DETERMINATION IN HER YOUNG EYES.
FOR HER, IT WASN'T A QUESTION OF WANTING TO DO ME HARM...
IT WAS ALL ABOUT NOT FAILING HER DUTY.
AND THAT MADE HER EVEN MORE DANGEROUS.

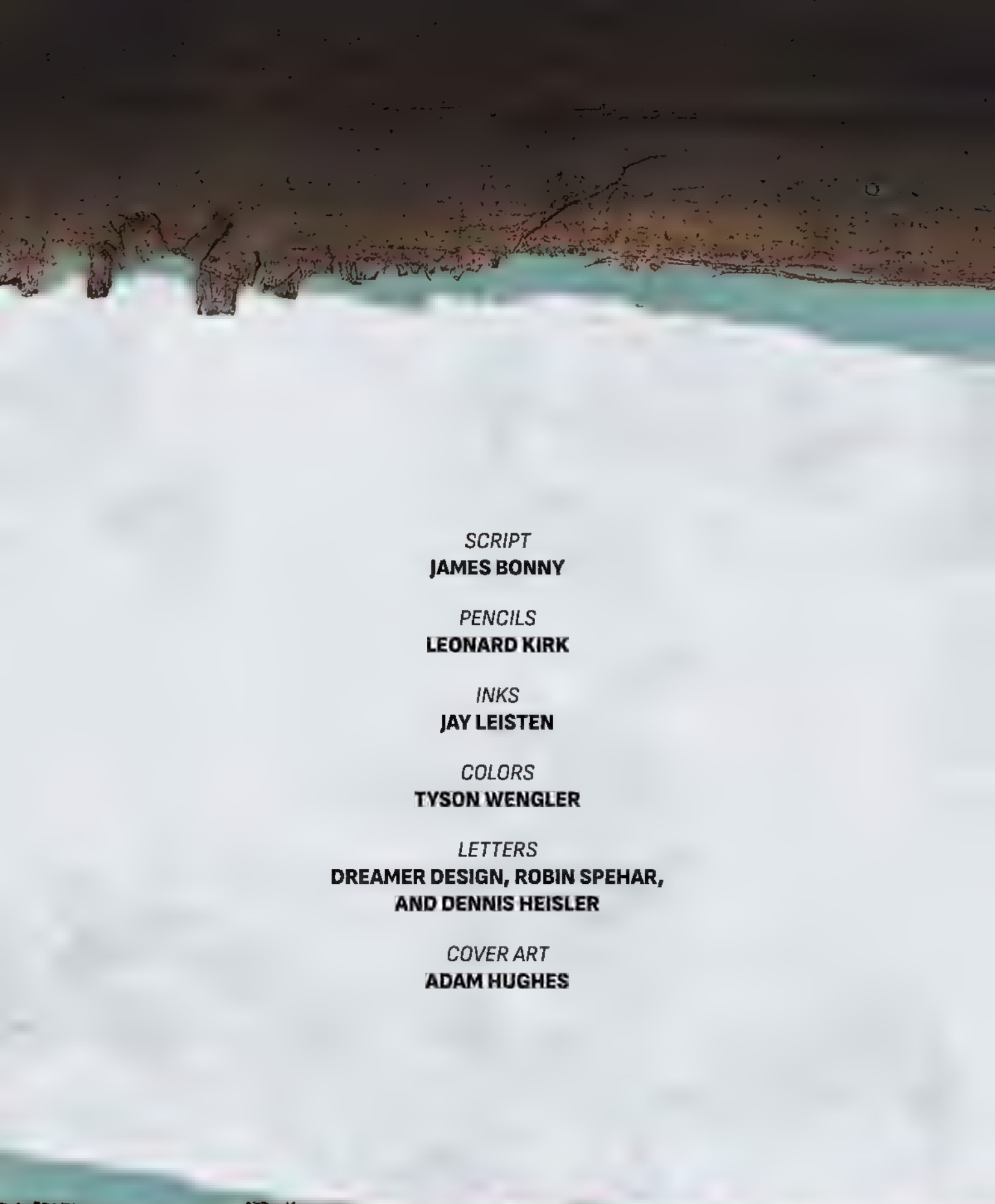
FORGIVE ME.
WWWSSSH!
CHAK!
BUMPH!
PHPP!
CAN'T... FAIL...
OH NO YOU DON'T.

WHY DID YOU SAVE ME?
TARGET IN MY SIGHTS.
I HAVE QUITE ENOUGH ON MY CONSCIENCE, THANK YOU.
NO!

KA-RAAK!
WHOMPHA! WHOMPHA! WHOMPHA!
KA-RAASH!
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
ONLY TIME WILL TELL.
IT APPEARS YOU COULD USE A LIFT.
SO WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
PATIENCE.
BETTER HANG ON TO YOUR SPEAR, PATIENCE. I TEND TO DRIVE A TAD FAST.
VROOMM!

uuhhua...
TARGET... HAS ESCAPED
AND YOU'RE QUITE CERTAIN IT WAS A VOLUNTARY DECISION?
VERY WELL, KRISTOF. I SHALL SEE TO THINGS.
I'M AFRAID THERE IS AN EXTREMELY TROUBLING DEVELOPMENT TO REPORT...

THE MAGDALENA HAS BECOME A ROGUE.
TO BE CONTINUED
NEXT ISSUE: GUEST PENCILER LEONARD KIRK TAKES ON TOMB RAIDER!



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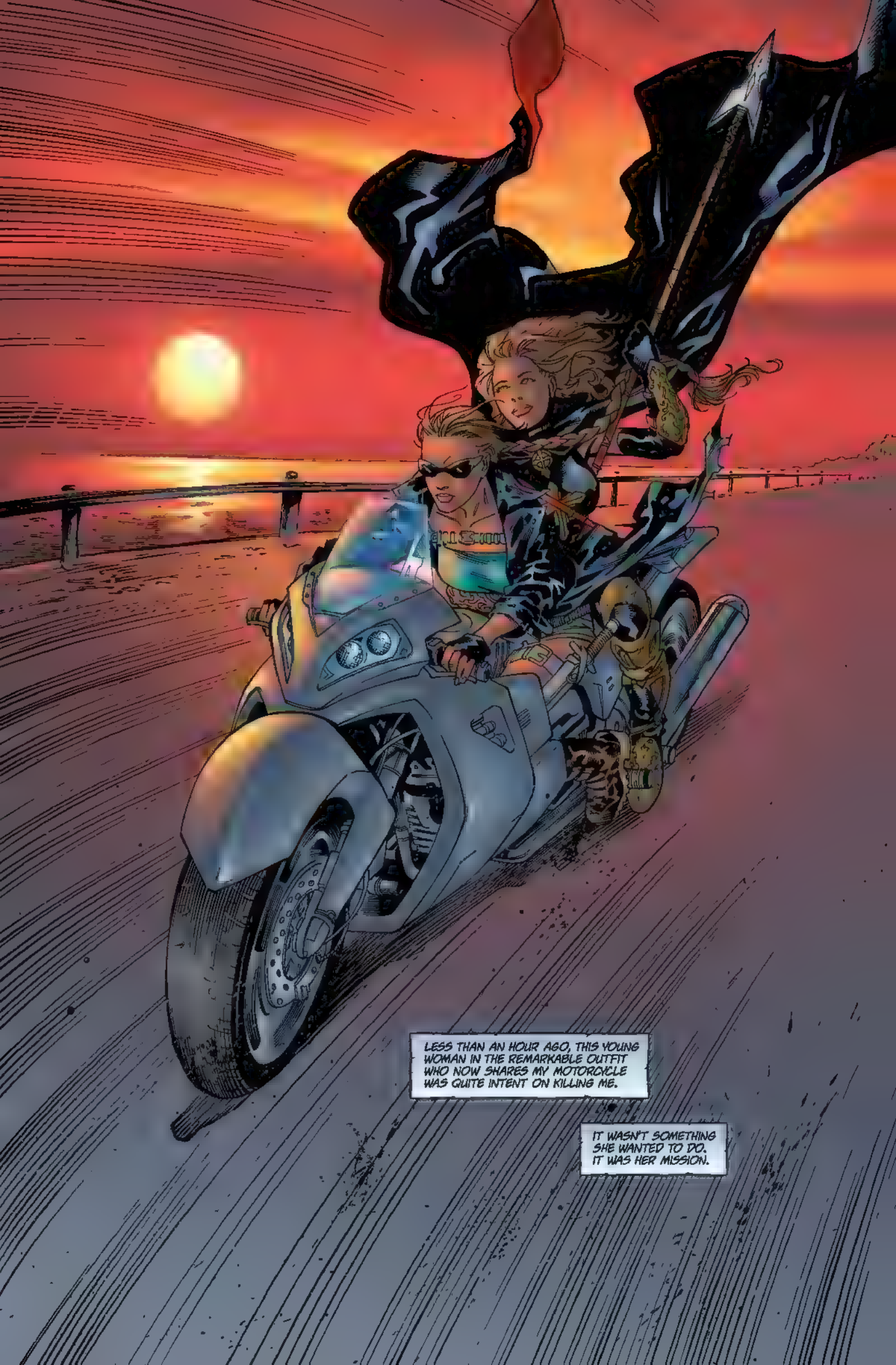
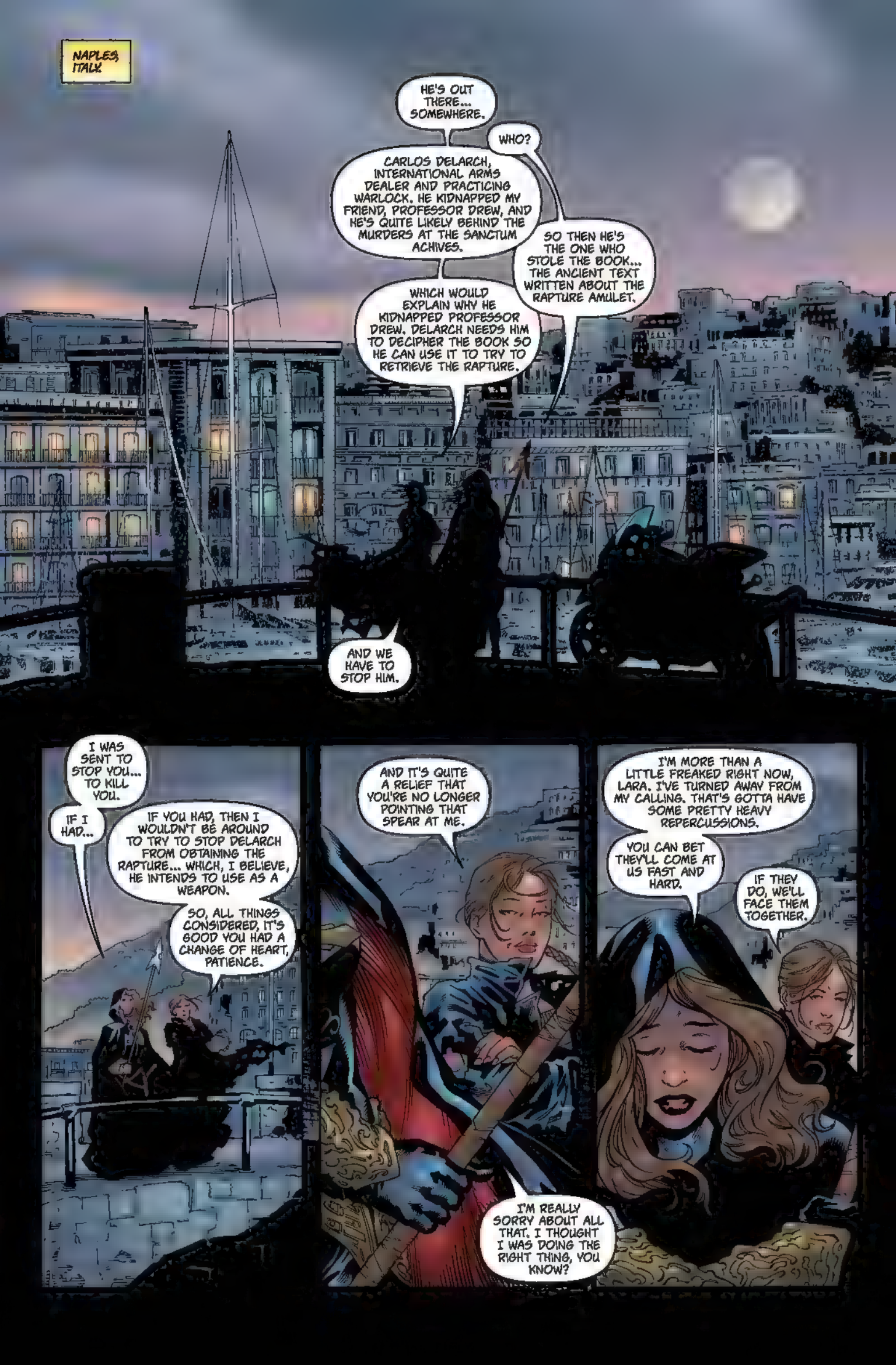

LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO, THIS YOUNG WOMAN IN THE REMARKABLE OUTFIT WHO NOW SHARES MY MOTORCYCLE WAS QUITE INTENT ON KILLING ME.
IT WASN'T SOMETHING SHE WANTED TO DO. IT WAS HER MISSION.

AS I'VE ONLY RECENTLY LEARNED, HER NAME IS PATIENCE, AND SHE COMES FROM A LONG LINE OF WOMEN, DESCENDANTS OF THE HOLY BLOODLINE, STRETCHING BACK 2000 YEARS— ALL OF WHOM HAD TAKEN ON THE SAME ROLE THAT PATIENCE NOW HOLDS.
THE MAGDALENA— WARRIOR AND PROTECTOR OF THE CHURCH, AND WIELDER OF THE SACRED SPEAR OF DESTINY.
PATIENCE HAD BEEN SENT TO STOP ME BEFORE I COULD LOCATE THE RAPTURE, AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT, WHICH ALLOWS ITS BEARER ACCESS TO OTHER DIMENSIONS. EVEN HELL ITSELF.
BUT PATIENCE TURNED HER BACK ON HER MISSION. AND IN DOING SO, SHE TURNED HER BACK ON THOSE SHE SERVED— THOSE WHO TRAINED HER TO WIELD DEADLY, AND SOMETIMES MYSTICAL FORCES, IN AN ON-GOING FIGHT AGAINST EVIL, BOTH HUMAN AND SUPERNATURAL.
NOW, PATIENCE AND I WERE ON THE SAME ROAD... YET NEITHER OF US COULD BE SURE WHERE IT WOULD ULTIMATELY LEAD.


NAPLES, ITALY.
HE'S OUT THERE... SOMEWHERE.
WHO?
CARLOS DELARCH, INTERNATIONAL ARMS DEALER AND PRACTICING WARLOCK. HE KIDNAPPED MY FRIEND, PROFESSOR DREW, AND HE'S QUITE LIKELY BEHIND THE MURDERS AT THE SANCTUM ACHIVES.
SO THEN HE'S THE ONE WHO STOLE THE BOOK... THE ANCIENT TEXT WRITTEN ABOUT THE RAPTURE AMULET.
WHICH WOULD EXPLAIN WHY HE KIDNAPPED PROFESSOR DREW. DELARCH NEEDS HIM TO DECIPHER THE BOOK SO HE CAN USE IT TO TRY TO RETRIEVE THE RAPTURE.
AND WE HAVE TO STOP HIM.
I WAS SENT TO STOP YOU... TO KILL YOU.
IF I HAD...
IF YOU HAD, THEN I WOULDN'T BE AROUND TO TRY TO STOP DELARCH FROM OBTAINING THE RAPTURE... WHICH, I BELIEVE, HE INTENDS TO USE AS A WEAPON.
SO, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, IT'S GOOD YOU HAD A CHANGE OF HEART, PATIENCE.
AND IT'S QUITE A RELIEF THAT YOU'RE NO LONGER POINTING THAT SPEAR AT ME.
I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT ALL THAT. I THOUGHT I WAS DOING THE RIGHT THING, YOU KNOW?
I'M MORE THAN A LITTLE FREAKED RIGHT NOW, LARA. I'VE TURNED AWAY FROM MY CALLING. THAT'S GOTTA HAVE SOME PRETTY HEAVY REPERCUSSIONS.
YOU CAN BET THEY'LL COME AT US FAST AND HARD.
IF THEY DO, WE'LL FACE THEM TOGETHER.

MALTA.
WE SHALL DESCEND LIKE THE ANGEL OF DEATH...
SWIFT AND SURE WILL BE OUR RESPONSE TO THIS BLASPHEMY.
PERHAPS PATIENCE HAS DONE WHAT SHE'S DONE FOR A REASON KNOWN ONLY TO HER. PERHAPS SHE'S SECRETLY TRYING TO GAIN LARA CROFT'S TRUST IN HOPES THAT SHE'LL LEAD HER TO THE RAPTURE... AND THEN SHE'LL ACT IN OUR INTEREST.
YOU ARE HER SHEPHERD, KRISTOF, YET PATIENCE NEARLY KILLED YOU WHEN SHE BROUGHT DOWN YOUR HELICOPTER... BROUGHT IT DOWN WITH THE SACRED SPEAR, NO LESS.
NO, KRISTOF, THERE CAN BE NO EXCUSE FOR WHAT THE MAGDALENA HAS DONE. SHE MUST BE DEALT WITH. AND THAT WILL REQUIRE OVERWHELMING FORCE.
THANKFULLY, WE ARE BLESSED TO HAVE SUCH FORCE AT OUR DISPOSAL.
THE ELITE SQUAD OF THE SWISS GUARD.

BUT YOU CAN'T HAND DOWN A DEATH SENTENCE BEFORE ALL OF THE FACTS ARE KNOWN.
WE'RE NOT IN A COURT OF LAW, KRISTOF. WHAT WE ARE DEALING WITH GOES BEYOND THE WORLD OF MAN.
AND IF LARA CROFT OBTAINS THE RAPTURE, THE WORLD OF MAN COULD SOON COME TO AN END. THE AUGURIES HAVE FORESEEN THIS.
THE AUGURIES ARE NOT INFALLIBLE. CERTAINLY THEY FAILED TO FORESEE THIS TURN OF EVENTS.
THE SEERS HAVE A FIRM LOCK ON THE TARGET... AND THE ROGUE.
BOTH ARE IN NAPLES.
VERY GOOD. THEN IT IS TIME...
WHOOMPH! WHOOMPH! WHOOMPH!
"...TIME TO LET FLY THE ANGEL OF DEATH."

NOW LOOK, I DON'T MEAN ANY OFFENSE, BUT I CAN'T SEE WHERE THIS IS GETTING US.
THE BOOK CONTAINS DARK POWERS... POWERS THAT ARE TIED TO THE RAPTURE AMULET... POWERS WHICH TRANSCEND THIS WORLD.
IF THE BOOK IS CLOSE, THE SPEAR WILL DETECT IT.
I APPRECIATE YOUR FAITH, PATIENCE. BUT EVERY MINUTE WE SIT HERE, DOING NOTHING, AFFORDS DELARCH ANOTHER MINUTE TO LOCATE THE RAPTURE...
DOING NOTHING, LARA?
I BEG TO DIFFER.
SORRY I DOUBTED YOU.
VROOOM!

MY GOD, THAT'S IT.
FINALLY FOUND SOMETHING, HAVE WE, PROFESSOR?
YES, I BELIEVE I HAVE. SOMETHING QUITE EXTRAORDINARY IN FACT.
WELL, DON'T LEAVE ME IN SUSPENSE. DO SHARE.
IT'S AN INCANTATION, WRITTEN IN AN ARCANE LANGUAGE. IF THIS TEXT IS TO BE BELIEVED, SPEAKING THE INCANTATION UNLOCKS A MYSTICAL DOORWAY, REVEALING A HOMING VORTEX, WHICH LEADS DIRECTLY TO THE RAPTURE, WHEREVER IT EXISTS... EVEN IF IT'S LOST IN ANOTHER DIMENSION.
BUT HOW CAN SUCH A THING BE POSSIBLE?
OH, MY DEAR PROFESSOR, THERE ARE MORE THINGS POSSIBLE THAN EVEN YOUR MIND COULD GRASP. THINGS WHICH WOULD MAKE YOUR HEAD EXPLODE. LITERALLY.
THIS IS THE FINAL KEY. SOON I'LL POSSESS THE RAPTURE... AND IN MY HANDS IT WILL BECOME THE GREATEST WEAPON THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN.
I NEVER BELIEVED THE RAPTURE ACTUALLY EXISTED. NOW THAT I KNOW I WAS WRONG, I'LL NOT HELP YOU ANY LONGER. NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO ME, DELARCH.
OH THAT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT, PROFESSOR, BECAUSE I NO LONGER REQUIRE YOUR HELP.

UUNNHH...
MISS FAWN, MISS LACEY, SOMEONE IS COMING. I CAN FEEL IT.
PRESENCE TO GREET THEM.

THE BOOK IS IN THERE.
I CAN FEEL IT.
THAT MEANS PROFESSOR DREW IS IN THERE AS WELL. ALONG WITH CARLOS DELARCH.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO? STORM THE BUILDING?
WHENEVER POSSIBLE, I PREFER THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.
SO MUCH FOR THE ELEMENT OF SURRPRISE.
FRIENDS OF YOURS, BY ANY CHANCE?
WELL, THEY'RE CERTAINLY WELCOME TO TRY.
THEY'RE THE ELITE SQUAD OF THE SWISS GUARD.
WHICH MEANS, THEY'RE HERE TO KILL US.

PATIENCE SAID THERE WOULD BE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS. IT APPEARS SHE WAS RIGHT.

BOAM!

IN CHOOSING NOT TO KILL ME, PATIENCE MAY HAVE SEALED HER OWN FATE.

BLAM!

WHICH PROVES THE OLD ADAGE THAT NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED.

BLAAM!

BOAMM!

BOOAM!

BLAMM!

VZINGG!

VNNG!

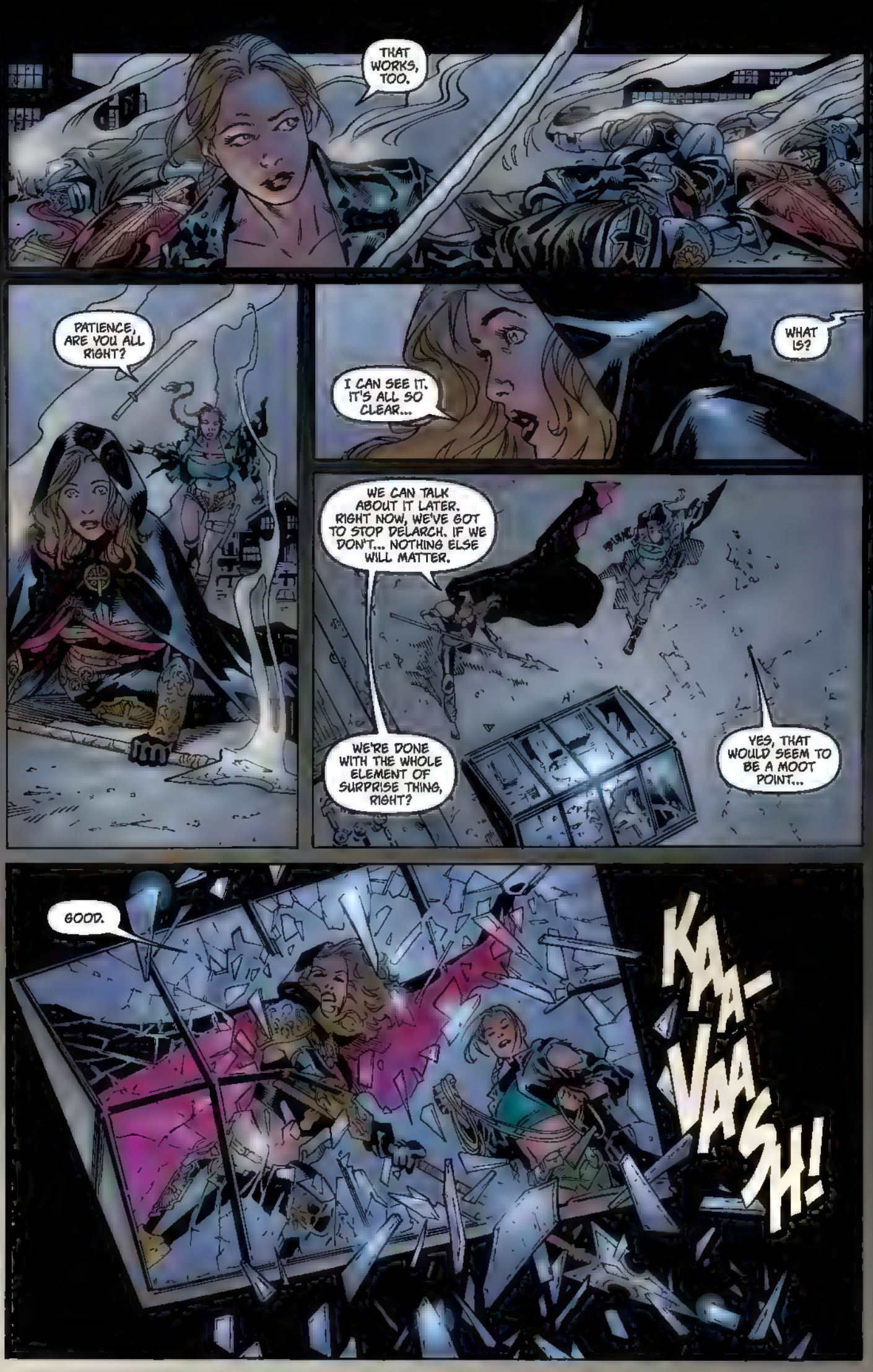
ZNNG!

BULLETS ARE USELESS AGAINST THEIR SHIELDS. YOU'LL NEED THIS.

CHEERS, LOVE.

TIME TO PUT MY RECENT TRAINING TO THE TEST.
TIME TO UNLOCK THE DOORWAY.
THE DOORWAY WHICH WILL LEAD TO THE RAPTURE. AND MY DESTINY.
"ALTRA... KAANFA... BORRATUS..."
"QUORTA... NEUTORB... FORWAAGNA..."
"DOONARB... VOLTA... TORGAANA..."
"RUSORD... MECTAFEE... ORDANTE..."

KTZKTZKTZ!
HUH?
PATIENCE? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I... DON'T...
NO!
KTZZZT-CHOW!
KTZ-CHOW!
KTZCHOW!


THAT WORKS, TOO.
PATIENCE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I CAN SEE IT. IT'S ALL SO CLEAR...
WHAT IS?
WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT LATER. RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT TO STOP DELARCH. IF WE DON'T... NOTHING ELSE WILL MATTER.
WE'RE DONE WITH THE WHOLE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE THING, RIGHT?
YES, THAT WOULD SEEM TO BE A MOOT POINT...
GOOD.
KA-A-VAA-SH!

THEY WERE WRONG.
WHO?
THE AUGURIES. IT'S NOT YOU WHO WOULD THREATEN EXISTENCE BY OBTAINING THE RAPTURE.
IT'S DELARCH!
BADAPP!
BAAOP!
BAOAAP!
BAAOAAP!
BAOAAP!
BADPP!
KA-KRAK!
HELLO.

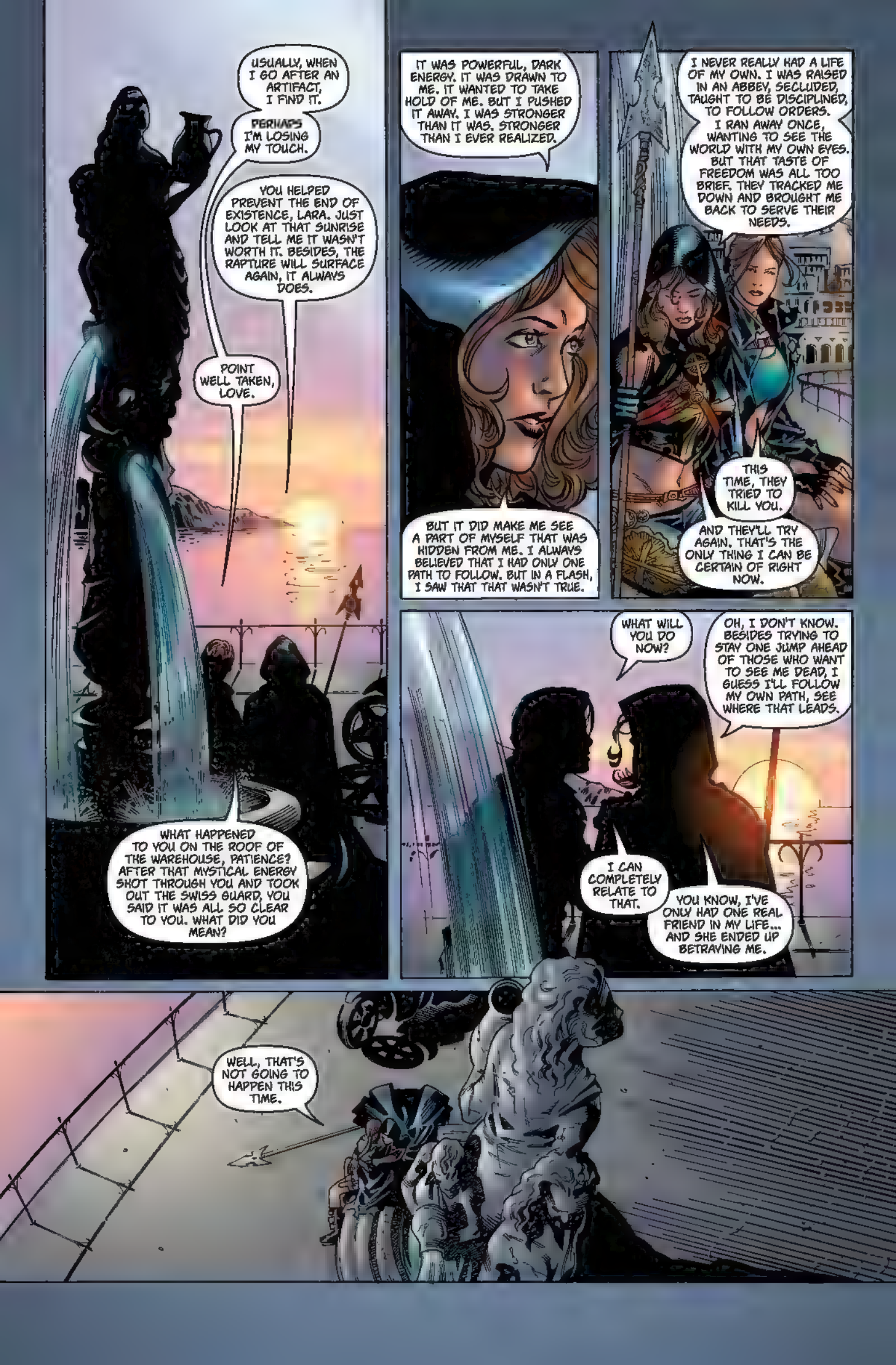
I LIKE THE GUNS...
BUT YOU TWO NEED TO LEARN TO ACCESSORIZE.
BAQDAPP!
BADAPP!
BADAPP!
BADAPP!
KLAK! KLAK!
KERBOOM!

"GORTHA... LUNARC... CHUTAR... VEV!"
WOOOSH!
I THINK WE MAY BE TOO LATE.
WE CAN'T BE.
=GASP=
UNTIL HE POSSESSES THE RAPTURE, THE POWER LIES IN THE BOOK...
PROFESSOR.
LARA... YOU HAVE TO STOP HIM. I GAVE HIM THE KEY... TO FINDING THE RAPTURE.
HOW CAN I STOP HIM, PROFESSOR?
UHH...

WWOOSH!
WE'VE GOT TO DESTROY THE BOOK.
HOW?
I BELIEVE THE SOLUTION IS IN YOUR HANDS.
HAND OVER THE BOOK... OR DIE.
SO CLOSE...
NO!
NO ONE WILL STOP ME! I'M GOING TO BE THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THE WORLD!

YOU'RE A LEGEND IN YOUR OWN MIND.
FNKSH!
VAA-VAASH!
KAA-VAASH!
THUNKSH!
WOOOSH!
NO...

WWOOSH!
GET DOWN!
WWOOSH!
AAAAAA!
FFVSH!
AAAIIEEEE!
KWOO-KOOSH!
KLANK-
KNK!


WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU ON THE ROOF OF THE WAREHOUSE, PATIENCE? AFTER THAT MYSTICAL ENERGY SHOT THROUGH YOU AND TOOK OUT THE SWISS GUARD, YOU SAID IT WAS ALL SO CLEAR TO YOU. WHAT DID YOU MEAN?
USUALLY, WHEN I GO AFTER AN ARTIFACT, I FIND IT.
PERHAPS I'M LOSING MY TOUCH.
YOU HELPED PREVENT THE END OF EXISTENCE, LARA. JUST LOOK AT THAT SUNRISE AND TELL ME IT WASN'T WORTH IT. BESIDES, THE RAPTURE WILL SURFACE AGAIN, IT ALWAYS DOES.
POINT WELL TAKEN, LOVE.
IT WAS POWERFUL, DARK ENERGY. IT WAS DRAWN TO ME. IT WANTED TO TAKE HOLD OF ME. BUT I PUSHED IT AWAY. I WAS STRONGER THAN IT WAS. STRONGER THAN I EVER REALIZED.
BUT IT DID MAKE ME SEE A PART OF MYSELF THAT WAS HIDDEN FROM ME. I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT I HAD ONLY ONE PATH TO FOLLOW. BUT IN A FLASH, I SAW THAT THAT WASN'T TRUE.
I NEVER REALLY HAD A LIFE OF MY OWN. I WAS RAISED IN AN ABBEY, SECLUDED, TAUGHT TO BE DISCIPLINED, TO FOLLOW ORDERS. I RAN AWAY ONCE, WANTING TO SEE THE WORLD WITH MY OWN EYES. BUT THAT TASTE OF FREEDOM WAS ALL TOO BRIEF. THEY TRACKED ME DOWN AND BROUGHT ME BACK TO SERVE THEIR NEEDS.
THIS TIME, THEY TRIED TO KILL YOU.
AND THEY'LL TRY AGAIN. THAT'S THE ONLY THING I CAN BE CERTAIN OF RIGHT NOW.
WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW?
OH, I DON'T KNOW. BESIDES TRYING TO STAY ONE JUMP AHEAD OF THOSE WHO WANT TO SEE ME DEAD, I GUESS I'LL FOLLOW MY OWN PATH, SEE WHERE THAT LEADS.
I CAN COMPLETELY RELATE TO THAT.
YOU KNOW, I'VE ONLY HAD ONE REAL FRIEND IN MY LIFE... AND SHE ENDED UP BETRAYING ME.
WELL, THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN THIS TIME.

WE MET AS ADVERSARIES. WE PARTED AS FRIENDS.
WE WERE BOTH FOLLOWING OUR OWN PATHS...
AND NEITHER OF US COULD BE SURE WHERE THEY WOULD ULTIMATELY LEAD.
THE END

VENDETTA

SCRIPT
JAMES BONNY

PENCILS
TYLER KIRKHAM AND MATT MERHOFF

INKS
SAL REGLA

COLORS
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LETTERS
DREAMER DESIGN, ROBIN SPEHAR,
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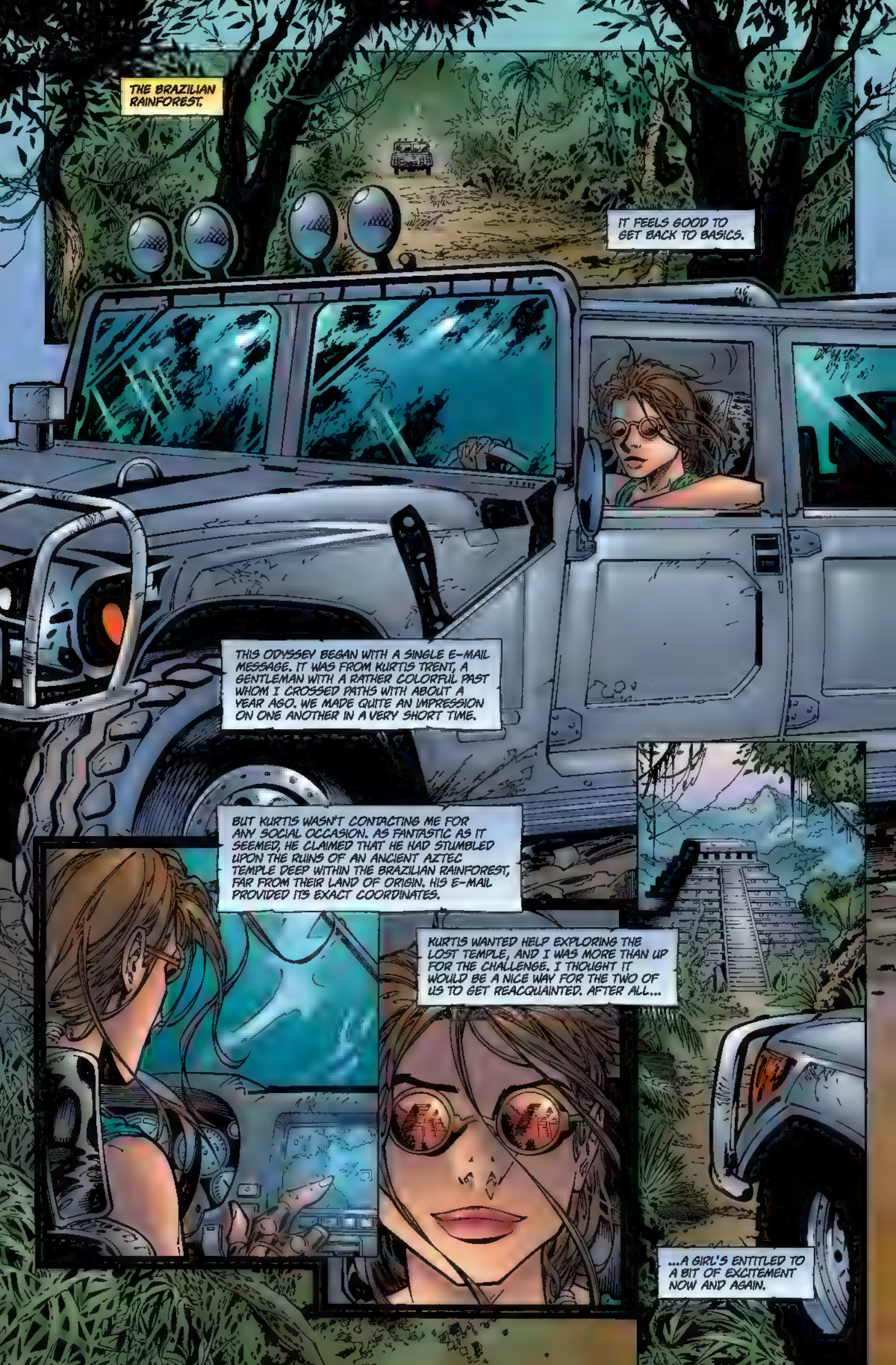
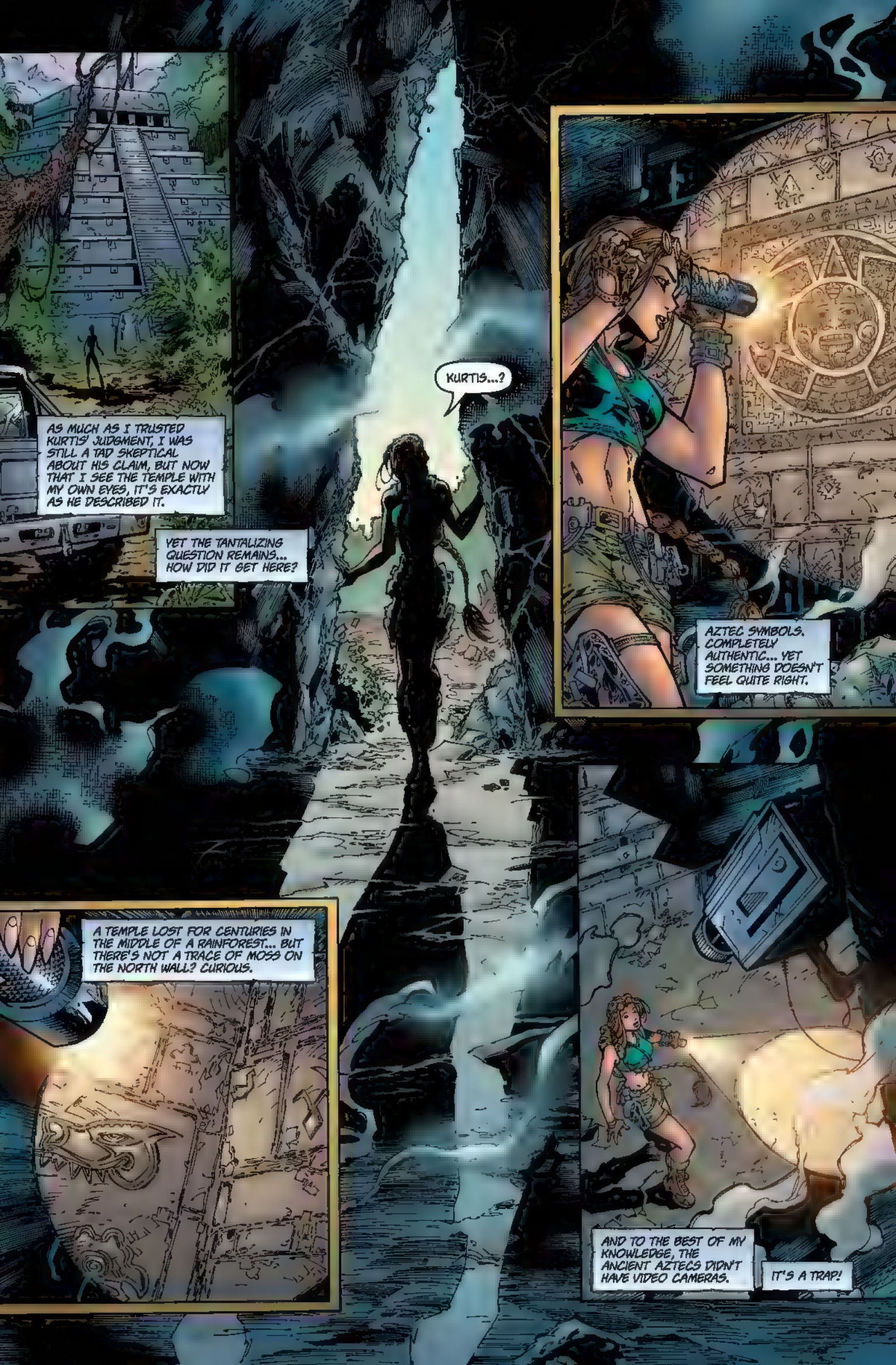
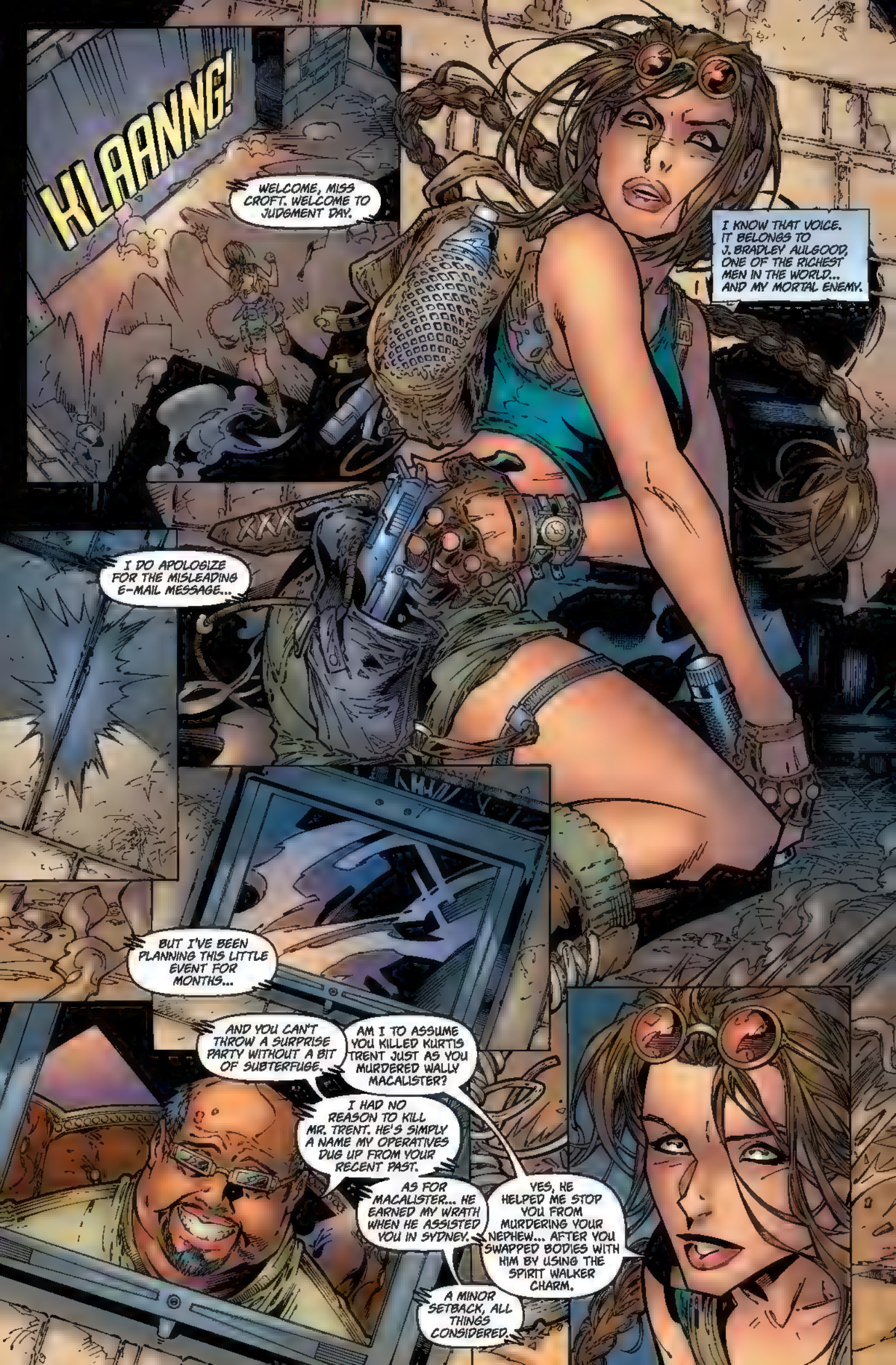

THE BRAZILIAN RAINFOREST.
IT FEELS GOOD TO GET BACK TO BASICS.
THIS ODYSSEY BEGAN WITH A SINGLE E-MAIL MESSAGE. IT WAS FROM KURTIS TRENT, A GENTLEMAN WITH A RATHER COLORFUL PAST WHOM I CROSSED PATHS WITH ABOUT A YEAR AGO. WE MADE QUITE AN IMPRESSION ON ONE ANOTHER IN A VERY SHORT TIME.
BUT KURTIS WASN'T CONTACTING ME FOR ANY SOCIAL OCCASION. AS FANTASTIC AS IT SEEMED, HE CLAIMED THAT HE HAD STUMBLED UPON THE RUINS OF AN ANCIENT AZTEC TEMPLE DEEP WITHIN THE BRAZILIAN RAINFOREST, FAR FROM THEIR LAND OF ORIGIN. HIS E-MAIL PROVIDED ITS EXACT COORDINATES.
KURTIS WANTED HELP EXPLORING THE LOST TEMPLE, AND I WAS MORE THAN UP FOR THE CHALLENGE. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A NICE WAY FOR THE TWO OF US TO GET REACQUAINTED. AFTER ALL...
...A GIRL'S ENTITLED TO A BIT OF EXCITEMENT NOW AND AGAIN.


AS MUCH AS I TRUSTED KURTIS' JUDGMENT, I WAS STILL A TAD SKEPTICAL ABOUT HIS CLAIM, BUT NOW THAT I SEE THE TEMPLE WITH MY OWN EYES, IT'S EXACTLY AS HE DESCRIBED IT.
YET THE TANTALIZING QUESTION REMAINS... HOW DID IT GET HERE?
KURTIS...?
AZTEC SYMBOLS. COMPLETELY AUTHENTIC... YET SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL QUITE RIGHT.
A TEMPLE LOST FOR CENTURIES IN THE MIDDLE OF A RAINFOREST... BUT THERE'S NOT A TRACE OF MOSS ON THE NORTH WALL? CURIOUS.
AND TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THE ANCIENT AZTECS DIDN'T HAVE VIDEO CAMERAS.
IT'S A TRAP!


KLAANNG!
WELCOME, MISS CROFT. WELCOME TO JUDGMENT DAY.
I KNOW THAT VOICE. IT BELONGS TO J. BRADLEY AULGOOD, ONE OF THE RICHEST MEN IN THE WORLD... AND MY MORTAL ENEMY.
I DO APOLOGIZE FOR THE MISLEADING E-MAIL MESSAGE...
BUT I'VE BEEN PLANNING THIS LITTLE EVENT FOR MONTHS...
AND YOU CAN'T THROW A SURPRISE PARTY WITHOUT A BIT OF SUBTERFUGE.
AM I TO ASSUME YOU KILLED KURTIS TRENT JUST AS YOU MURDERED WALLY MACALISTER?
I HAD NO REASON TO KILL MR. TRENT. HE'S SIMPLY A NAME MY OPERATIVES DUG UP FROM YOUR RECENT PAST.
AS FOR MACALISTER... HE EARNED MY WRATH WHEN HE ASSISTED YOU IN SYDNEY.
YES, HE HELPED ME STOP YOU FROM MURDERING YOUR NEPHEW... AFTER YOU SWAPPED BODIES WITH HIM BY USING THE SPIRIT WALKER CHARM.
A MINOR SETBACK, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

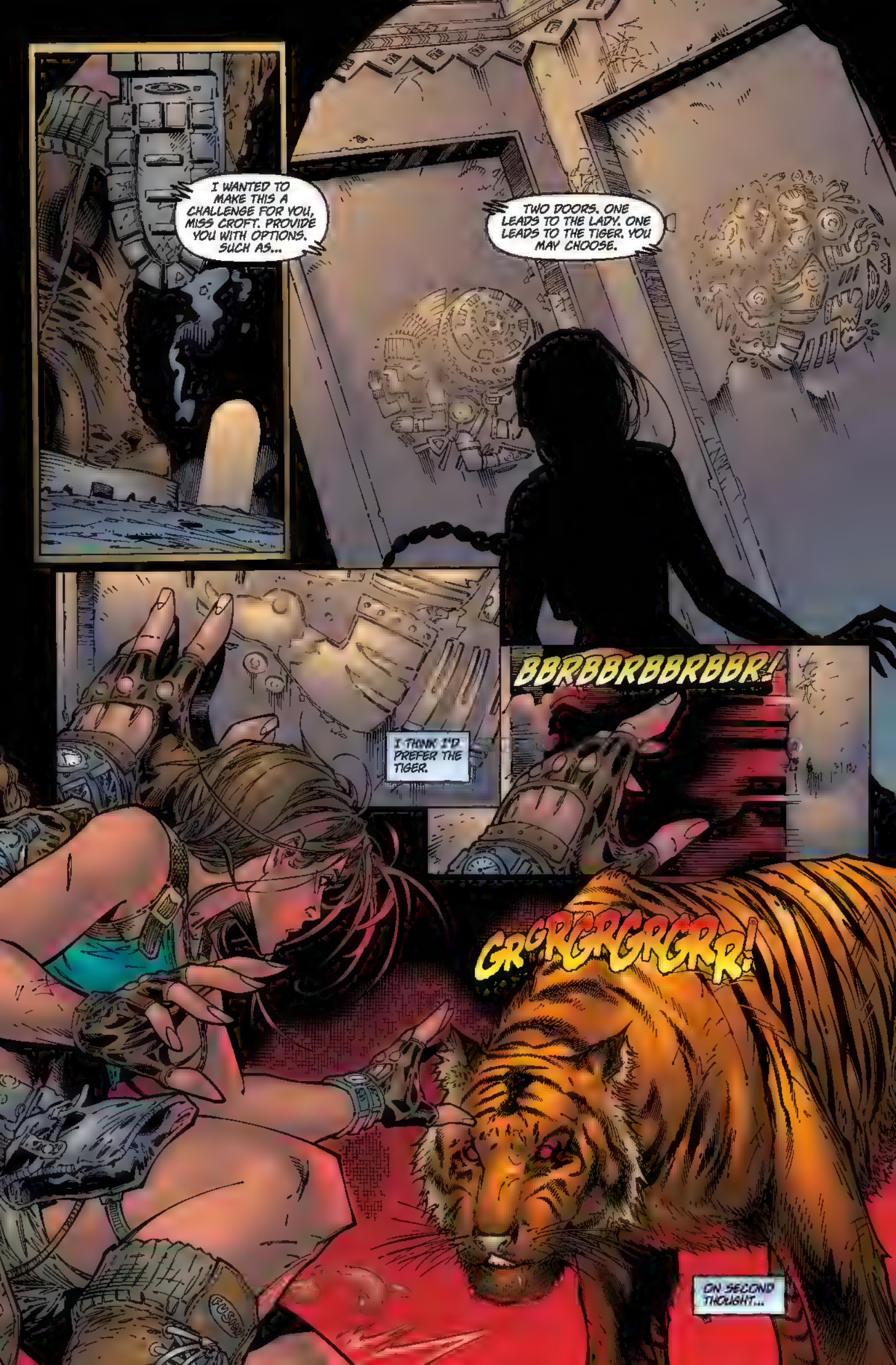
AS FOR YOU, YOUR FATE WILL BE DECIDED HERE, IN MY OWN PRIVATE TEMPLE OF DOOM. AFTER MONTHS OF CONSTRUCTION, AT GREAT PERSONAL COST, THE TIME WAS RIGHT TO LURE YOU HERE.
SURELY A SNIPER'S BULLET WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR SIMPLER. NOT TO MENTION MORE THRIFTY.
IF I'D SIMPLY WANTED TO KILL YOU, MISS CROFT, YOU'D BE DEAD ALREADY. I FULLY INTEND TO ALLOW YOU A CHANCE TO SURVIVE. THERE IS BUT ONE WAY OUT OF HERE. FIND IT, AND YOU MAY LEAVE WITH MY BLESSING.
IT WON'T BE EASY, HOWEVER. JUST LIKE MR. WONKA'S FABLED CHOCOLATE FACTORY, THERE ARE SURPRISES AROUND EVERY CORNER.
INDEED? KILLER OOMPA-LOOMPAS?
HARDLY. BUT THERE IS ONE HUMAN OBSTACLE IN THE MIX. AND I BELIEVE YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER.
HEY THERE, PRINCESS. LONG TIME NO SEE. BUT YOU'RE ALWAYS IN MY DREAMS.
YOU'RE GOING TO WISH I WAS DEAD, SWEETIE. AND BEFORE THIS IS ALL OVER, YOU'RE GOING TO WISH YOU WERE NEVER BORN.
SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO...
LADY JASMINE. WELL, ISN'T THIS A DOUBLE TREAT. I THOUGHT YOU DIED IN ARIZONA.
THAT'S ENOUGH, LADIES. IT'S GOOD TO GET YOUR BLOOD UP BEFORE THE COMPETITION... BUT I FROWN ON TOO MUCH TRASH TALK.
LET THE GAMES BEGIN.
WOOOSH!

AFTER MY ENCOUNTER WITH J. BRADLEY AULGOOD IN AUSTRALIA, I KNEW HE WAS SERIOUSLY UNBALANCED.
BUT I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS THIS DEMENTED.
JUST LOOK AT HER. THE INTREPID EXPLORER VENTURING BOLDLY INTO THE GREAT UNKNOWN. DOESN'T IT JUST GIVE YOU GOOSEBUMPS?
ENOUGH FOREPLAY. LET'S GET THE PARTY STARTED, ALL-BAD.
PLEASE, L.J., YOU KNOW HOW I ABHOR THAT NICKNAME.
VVVSHVSH!
DEMENTED OR NOT...
WWSSHWSH!
I SUPPOSE AULGOOD DESERVES CREDIT FOR CREATIVITY.

VVVSHVSH!
FEELS LIKE I'M CAUGHT IN A BLOODY VIDEO GAME.
VVSSHVSH!
VVSHVSH!

VVVSH-FFTTH!
VVVSH-FNKK!
VERY GOOD, MISS CROFT. JUST A LITTLE TASTE OF WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU TO KEEP YOU ON YOUR TOES. HEH-HEH.
THE ONE THING GUARANTEED TO KEEP ME ON MY TOES IS THE PROSPECT OF FINDING AULGOOD...
...AND GIVING HIM A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE.

BOAAM!
BOOAM!
BOAMM!
THUNKSH!
A LITTLE TRIGGER-HAPPY, AREN'T WE, MISS CROFT?
REST ASSURED, I'VE PROMISED YOU A FAIR FIGHT...
WAWAAAAA!
KLNGG! KLANNG!
BUT KNOWING YOUR PROWESS WITH FIREARMS...
THIS SEEMS ONLY FAIR.


I WANTED TO MAKE THIS A CHALLENGE FOR YOU, MISS CROFT. PROVIDE YOU WITH OPTIONS. SUCH AS...
TWO DOORS. ONE LEADS TO THE LADY. ONE LEADS TO THE TIGER. YOU MAY CHOOSE.
I THINK I'D PREFER THE TIGER.
BRRBBRBBRBBR!
GRGRGRGRGRGRR!
ON SECOND THOUGHT...

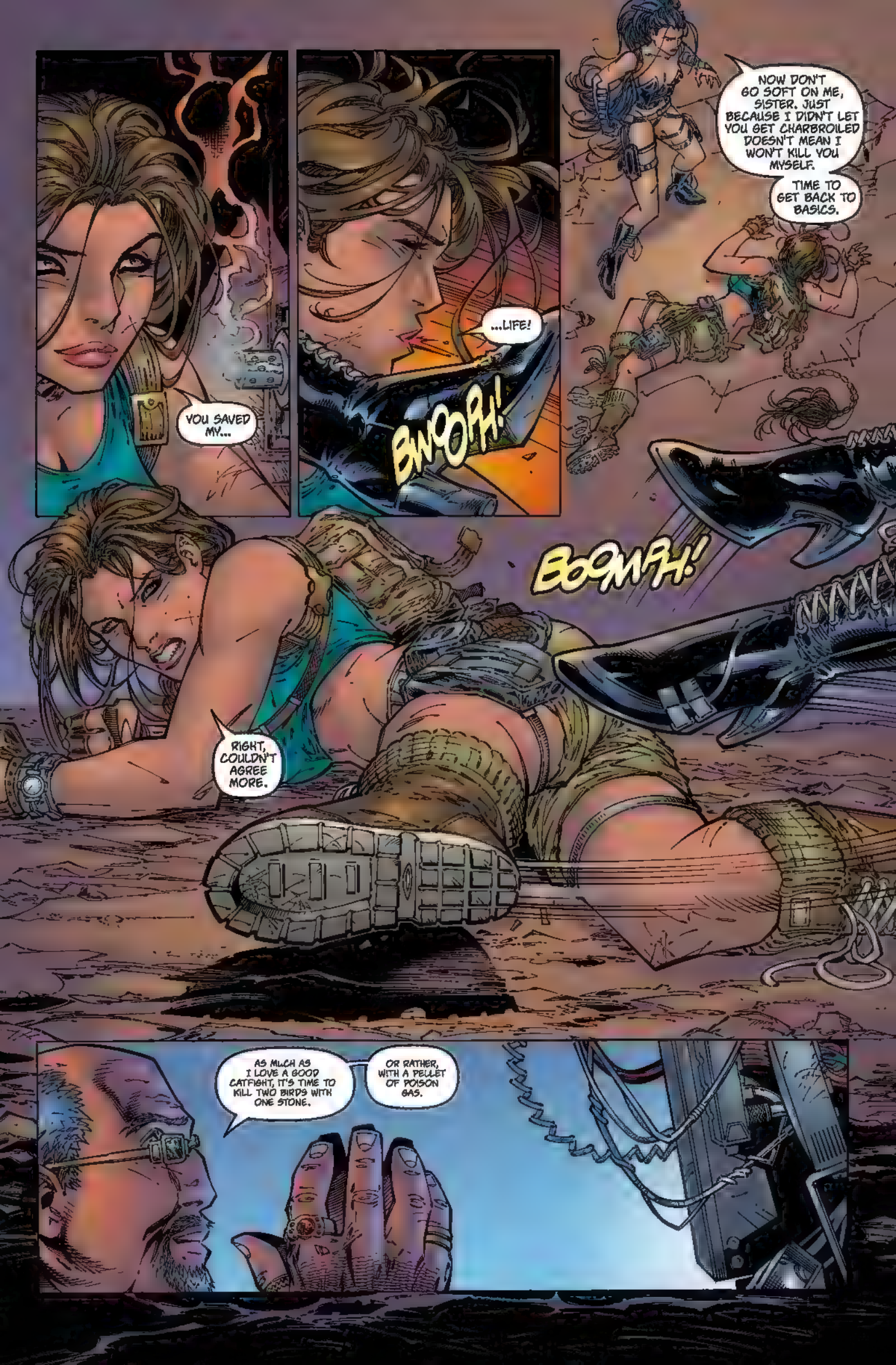
GGRRAAAWRR!
THE WAY I SEE IT, I'VE GOT TWO OPTIONS.
I COULD TRY MY BEST TO GET PAST THIS HUNGRY CAT...
...AND CONTINUE ON MY MERRY WAY THROUGH AULGOOD'S FUNHOUSE...
...OR I CAN TRY TO CHANGE THE RULES.

BBRBBRBBRR!
I SEE YOU CHOOSE THE LADY. I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS MOMENT.
ACTUALLY, YOU WERE MY SECOND CHOICE.
MEET MY FIRST CHOICE.
GRGRAWR!
YOU ARE FULL OF SURPRISES, MISS CROFT.
CUTE, CROFT, BUT YOU WOULD HAVE STOOD A BETTER CHANCE WITH FLUFFY HERE.

THAT'S HARDLY SPORTING.
KLAAK!
BESIDES, TIGERS ARE ENDANGERED.
SIMPLY DELIGHTFUL.
CONGRATULATIONS, CROFT. YOU'LL GO TO YOUR GRAVE KNOWING THAT YOU TOOK ME WITH YOU.
THAT MAKES THREE OF US.
WELL, WE MAY BE IN THE SAME BOAT, BUT WE'RE NOT DEAD YET.
I ASSUME YOU KNOW THE WAY OUT OF HERE.
NICE TRY, BUT I'D RATHER BE CAT FOOD THAN HELP YOU.
I UNDERSTAND. WE ALL HAVE CHOICES IN LIFE.

GGRRAAWWRR!
WHOMP!
BWOOPH!
WHOMPH!
WELL, WHAD'YA KNOW ABOUT THAT? LOOKS LIKE WE MAKE A PRETTY GOOD TEAM, PRINCESS.
I GUESS IT'S LIKE THAT OLD ADAGE... A LUNGING TIGER MAKES FOR STRANGE BEDFELLOWS.
I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THIS IS SHAPING UP ONE DARN BIT.

AS SOON AS WE PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN US AND FLUFFY...
WE CAN STOP COOPERATING AND GO BACK TO BEING MORTAL ENEMIES?
ACTUALLY I WAS GOING TO SAY I COULD USE A SMOKE. BUT THAT WORKS FOR ME TOO.
LOOK OUT!
WHAT...?
WWOOOSH!
WWOOOSHH!
WWOOOSHH!


YOU SAVED MY...
...LIFE!
BWOOPH!
NOW DON'T GO SOFT ON ME, SISTER. JUST BECAUSE I DIDN'T LET YOU GET CHARBROILED DOESN'T MEAN I WON'T KILL YOU MYSELF.
TIME TO GET BACK TO BASICS.
BOOMPH!
RIGHT, COULDN'T AGREE MORE.
AS MUCH AS I LOVE A GOOD CATFIGHT, IT'S TIME TO KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE.
OR RATHER, WITH A PELLET OF POISON GAS.

THIS IS LIKE DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN. YOU AND ME FIGHTING IT OUT, MANO A MANO. JUST LIKE IN THE SUPERSTITION MOUNTAINS.
BUT THIS TIME YOU'RE TEAMED UP WITH AULGOOD. THAT'S A NEW TWIST.
OH, ALL-BAD AND I GO WAY BACK. HE'S BANKROLLED MY ENDEAVORS MANY TIMES, ALWAYS DEMANDING MORE THAN HIS SHARE OF THE SPOILS. HE'S RUTHLESS, GREEDY, AND A GENUINE THREAT TO THE FUTURE OF THE PLANET.
MY KIND OF MAN.
SOUNDS LIKE YOU TWO ARE MEANT FOR EACH OTHER.
BAAPP!
HE'S NOT MY TYPE.
NOW YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND...
WHOOMP!
SORRY, LOVE. NOT INTERESTED.
SMELLS LIKE BITTER ALMONDS...
SORRY IT HAD TO END THIS WAY, L.J., BUT SOMETHING TELLS ME YOU'VE LOST YOUR EDGE.
CYANIDE!

I MAY BE ONE OF THE RICHEST MEN ON EARTH, BUT I CAN'T AFFORD TO LET LARA CROFT COME OUT OF THIS ALIVE. I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND.
THIS WAY, PRINCESS! WE'VE GOT A SCORE TO SETTLE.
THAT BLOATED, BACK-STABBING BAG OF BILE. I'LL SHOW HIM WHO'S LOST THEIR EDGE.
TERRIBLE WHEN A TRUSTED ALLY TURNS ON YOU.
IT'S HAPPENED TO YOU, HAS IT?
ONCE OR TWICE.
KKREEK!
NO. THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE. I SEALED THE DOORS. THEY COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN OUT.
YOU PROVIDED ME WITH AN ALL-ACCESS PASS, AULGOOD.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WOULDN'T BE EASY TO ELIMINATE YOU TWO CHARMING LADIES. NOT WHEN YOU WERE WORKING AS A TEAM.

I THOUGHT WE WERE ON THE SAME TEAM, ALL-BAD. WHAT GIVES?

I BANKROLLED YOUR EXPEDITION TO THE SUPERSTITION MOUNTAINS, L.J., AND YOU CAME BACK EMPTY-HANDED.

IT'S NOT IN MY NATURE TO FORGIVE THAT SORT OF THING.

BAA-DAPP!

BAA-DDAP!

BADD-AAP!

BADD-AAPP!

BAA-DAP!

BADD-APP!

BAD-APP!

BADD-APP!

BAD-DAPP!

KAA-VAAGSH!

BADD-APP!

WELL, WE SEEM TO BE MAKING A MESS OF MY CONTROL ROOM. BUT I DON'T NEED THE INNER WORKINGS OF THIS TEMPLE TO FINISH THE JOB AT HAND.

AND I DON'T NEED BULLETS.

SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIENDS.

VOOOSSSH!

KA-BLAAM!

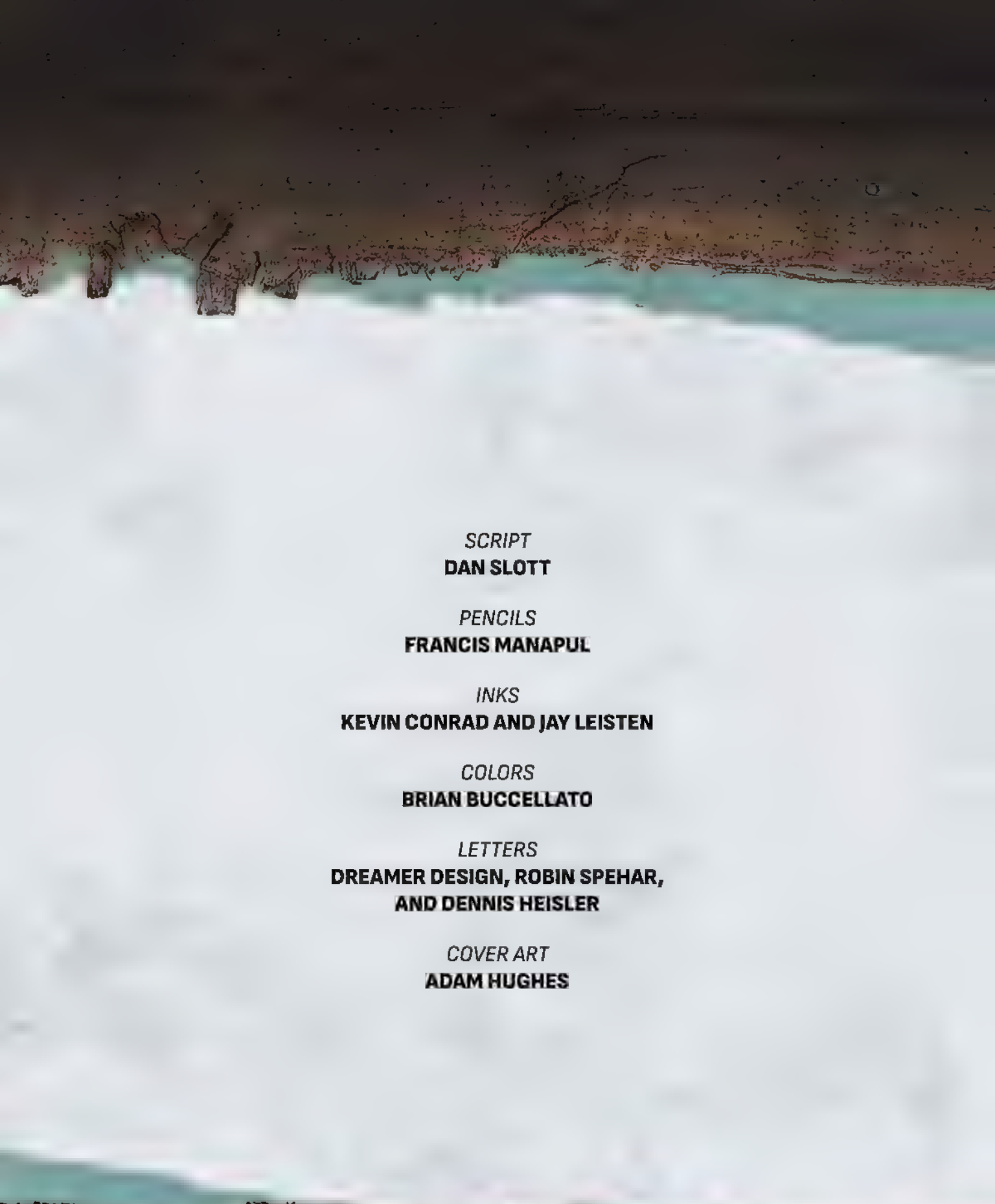
VOOOSSSH!

VOOOSSHH!
BRING IN THE HELICOPTER, MR. FINNEY. IT SEEMS OUR BIRDS HAVE FLOWN THE COOP.
GGGRRGRRGGRR!
HOLD ON A SEC, I HAVE TO PUT THE CAT OUT.
CLIK!
CLKK!
GGGRRGGRRR!
NICE... KITTY... KITTY...

GGRRRAAAAARRLL!
SOUNDS LIKE FLUFFY GOT HIS DIN-DIN.
WELL, AT LEAST SOMETHING GOOD CAME OUT OF THIS.
YOU PULLED ME OUT OF THE LINE OF FIRE UP THERE.
SEEMED THE FAIR THING TO DO GIVEN THE FACT THAT YOU SAVED ME FROM GETTING FRIED.
BUT I SUPPOSE I'LL LIVE TO REGRET IT.
NO, I THINK THAT JUST ABOUT SQUARES US, CROFT.
YOU'RE QUITE SURE ABOUT THAT? WE COULD BATTLE TO THE DEATH OUT HERE.
NAH. I THINK IT'S TIME TO LET BYGONES BE BYGONES.
WORKS FOR ME.
PSYCH!
YOU'RE SO BLOODY PREDICTABLE.
SWOOP!
CAN'T BLAME ME FOR TRYING.
I'D BE DISAPPOINTED IF YOU HADN'T.

NOT AT ALL WHAT I EXPECTED FROM THIS TRIP...
BUT THEN AGAIN, I SELDOM ENCOUNTER THE EXPECTED IN MY TRAVELS. WHICH IS JUST THE WAY I LIKE IT. AFTER ALL...
...A GIRL'S ENTITLED TO A BIT OF EXCITEMENT NOW AND AGAIN.
THE END
THANKS TO JIM BONNY FOR 19 GREAT AND ACTION-PACKED ISSUES OF TOMB RAIDER! NEXT MONTH: WRITER DAN SLOTT AND THE #50 ANNIVERSARY EXTRAVAGANZA!

ALPHA OMEGA



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LETTERS
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AND DENNIS HEISLER

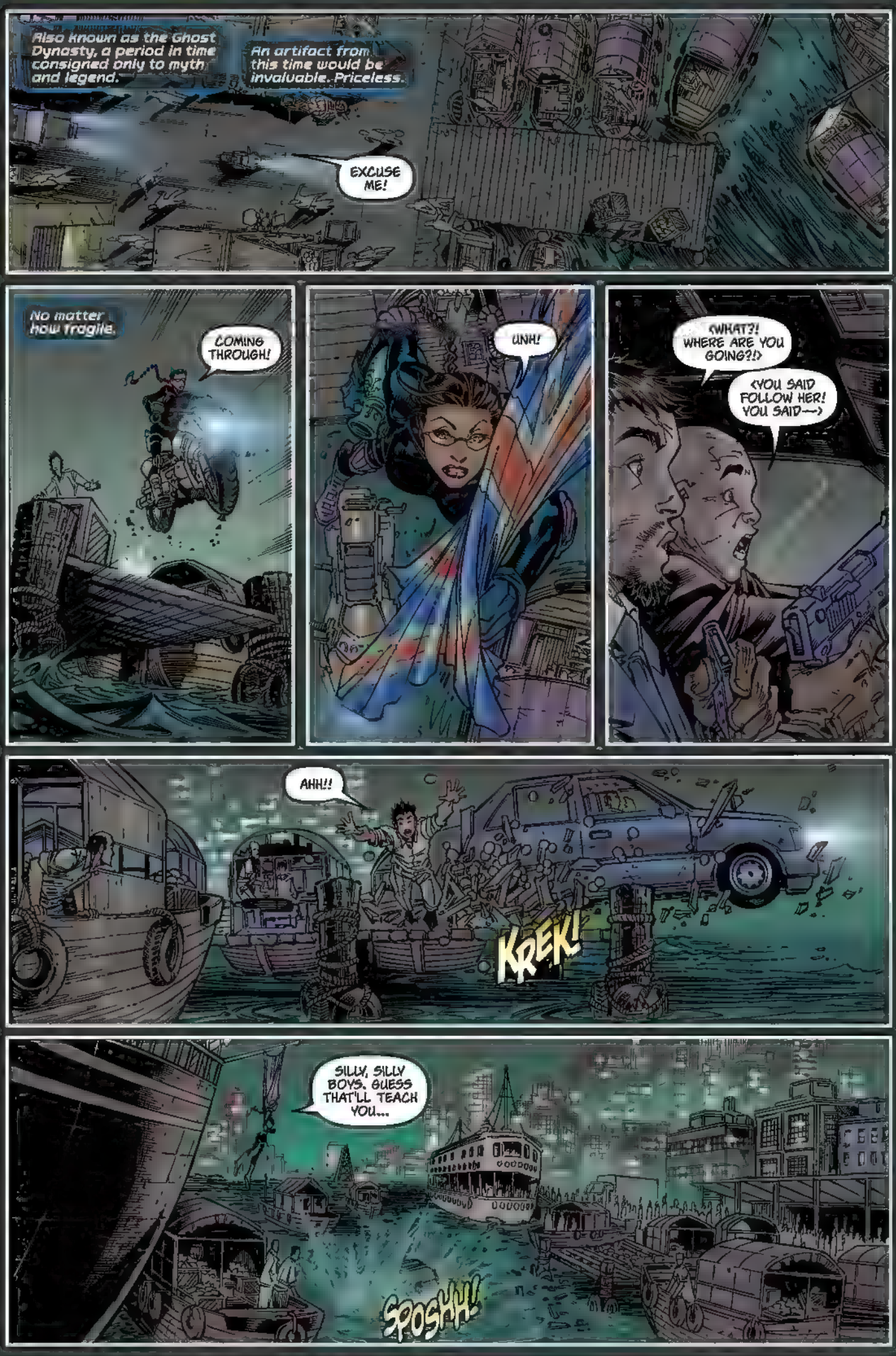
COVER ART
ADAM HUGHES

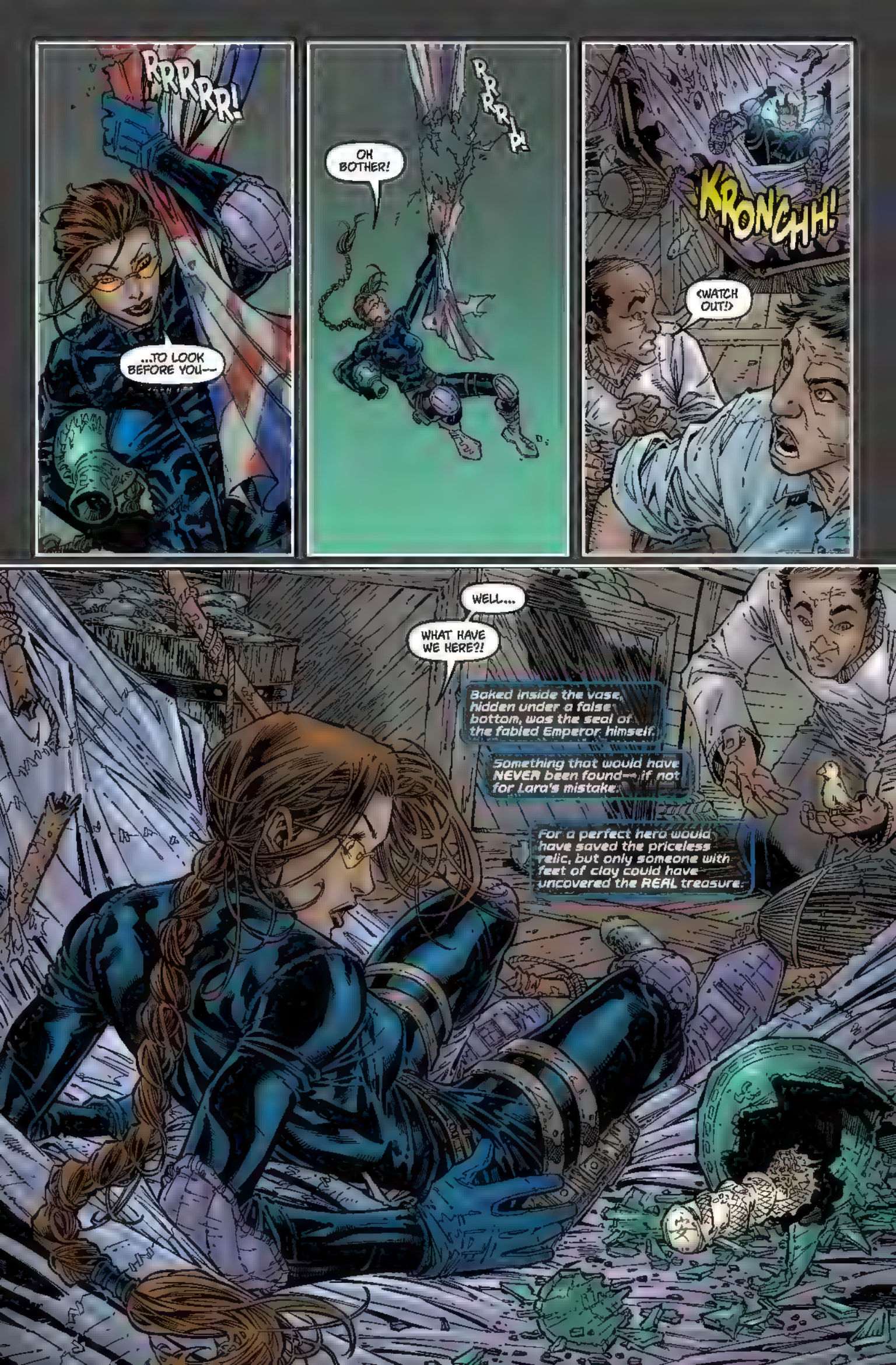
Welcome to the Croft Museum.
Before entering, we ask that you please turn off all recording devices.
...and deposit any food or beverages in the nearby receptacles.
A holographic tour guide will be with you shortly. We hope you enjoy your visit.
THE CROFT MUSEUM EST. 2020
CLICK Hello-My name's Polly Gon. And I'll be your interactive guide today.
DADDY, SOMETHING'S OFF WITH HER TEXTURE MAP. SHE'S GONE ALL "BLOCKY."
Ah. Actually, my programming is not based on the REAL Lara Croft
...but rather the original vid-game character she inspired.
As the legendary Tomb Raider, Lady Croft's adventures have been adapted into many forms.
From movies, to comic books, and even the neuro-immersive dream novels you enjoy today.
For the past five centuries these stories have inspired the world's greatest archeologists.
But as for what inspired Lara, herself?
That would probably be THIS, her FIRST treasure. The Lotus of Lakshmi.

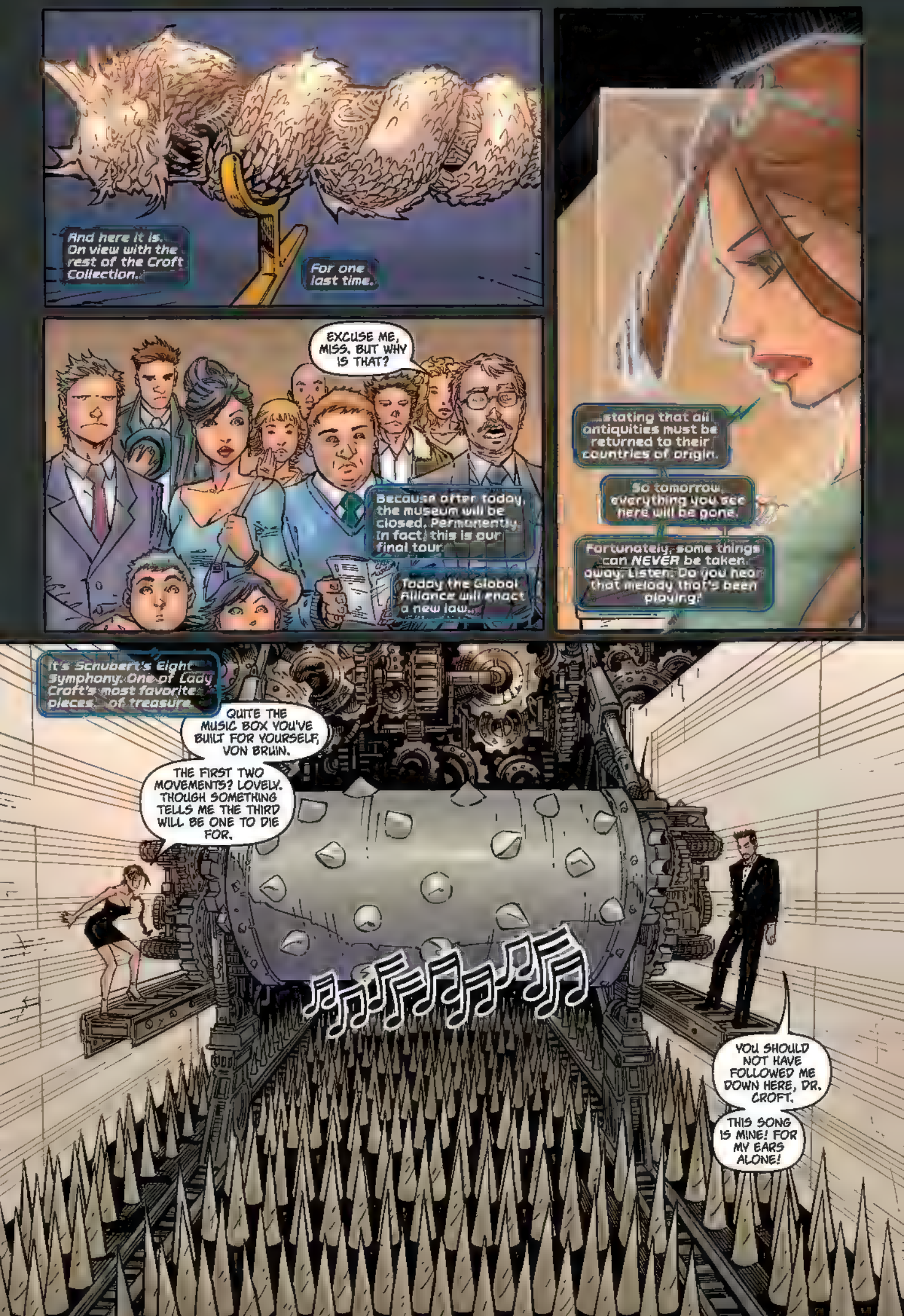
She acquired it while on an expedition with her parents.
A landslide in an Indian mountain range had unearthed a hidden temple...
...dedicated to Vishnu, God of generosity, and his love Lakshmi, Goddess of wealth and good fortune.
The jeweled Lotus was the most impressive find of the excavation.
And what made that even MORE incredible, is that the person who discovered it...
LARA? WHAT IS THAT? WHAT DO YOU HAVE THERE?
...was only eight years old at the time.
LARA, WHERE DID YOU GET THAT? I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU NOT TO TOUCH ANYTHING!
BUT IT WAS SO PRETTY...
UNBELIEVABLE!
DR. PANJABI?
LORD AND LADY CROFT! I WARNED YOU NOT TO BRING THAT CHILD IN HERE!
WHO KNOWS WHAT KINDS OF BOOBY TRAPS ARE IN THIS PLACE!
WHY ANYTHING SHE TOUCHES COULD BE SOME KIND OF HIDDEN SWITCH OR---
KLIK-IKK!
---LEVER. OH NO.

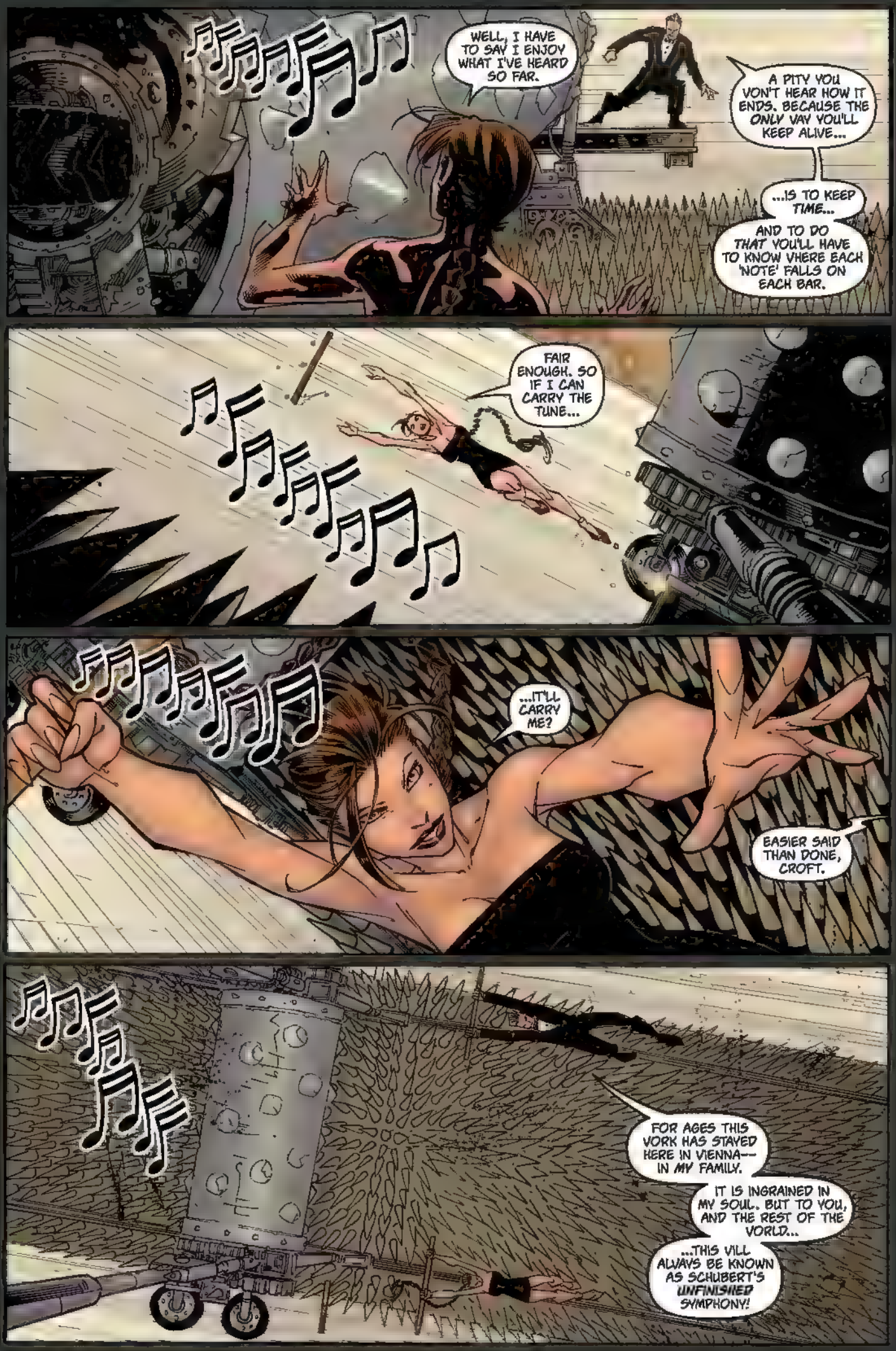
THE ROOF!
ANDREA!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME! GRAB LARA--
--AND RUN!
BWACHOOM!
THE TEMPLE! IT IS DESTOYED! ALL THOSE TREASURES, LOST FOR THE AGES!
NOT ALL OF THEM, DOCTOR. LARA? DO YOU STILL HAVE THAT FLOWER?
YES, FATHER.
GOOD SHOW, LARA. MUMMY AND DADDY ARE VERY PROUD OF YOU.
MUM?
YES, DEAR?
THINK I KNOW WHAT I WANT TO BE WHEN I GROW UP.
And so began a lifetime of adventure.

WOW! LOOK AT THAT! AND THAT!
SHE'S BRILLIANT! BET SHE COULD DO ANYTHING!
Despite how Lady Croft has been portrayed in historical FICTION...
...documented evidence and her own personal journals paint a different picture.
She was, in fact, capable of making mistakes.
Sometimes very COSTLY ones.
Case in point: In her teens, Lara had occasion to visit Hong Kong...
SILLY BOYS...
HOW WILL YOU EVER GET THIS BACK IN ONE PIECE...
...IF YOU KEEP SHOOTING AT ME?
<NO ONE STEALS FROM THE CHIN TONG AND LIVES!>
WELL, THERE IS THAT.
...where she had uncovered a vase from the Shang-Ti Dynasty.


Also known as the Ghost Dynasty, a period in time consigned only to myth and legend.
An artifact from this time would be invaluable. Priceless.
EXCUSE ME!
No matter how fragile.
COMING THROUGH!
UNH!
<WHAT?! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!>
<YOU SAID FOLLOW HER! YOU SAID—>
AHH!!
KREK!
SILLY, SILLY BOYS. GUESS THAT'LL TEACH YOU...
SPOSHH!


RRRRR!
...TO LOOK BEFORE YOU--
RRRRR!
OH BOTHER!
KRONCHH!
<WATCH OUT!>
WELL...
WHAT HAVE WE HERE?!
Baked inside the vase, hidden under a false bottom, was the seal of the fabled Emperor himself.
Something that would have NEVER been found-- if not for Lara's mistake.
For a perfect hero would have saved the priceless relic, but only someone with feet of clay could have uncovered the REAL treasure.

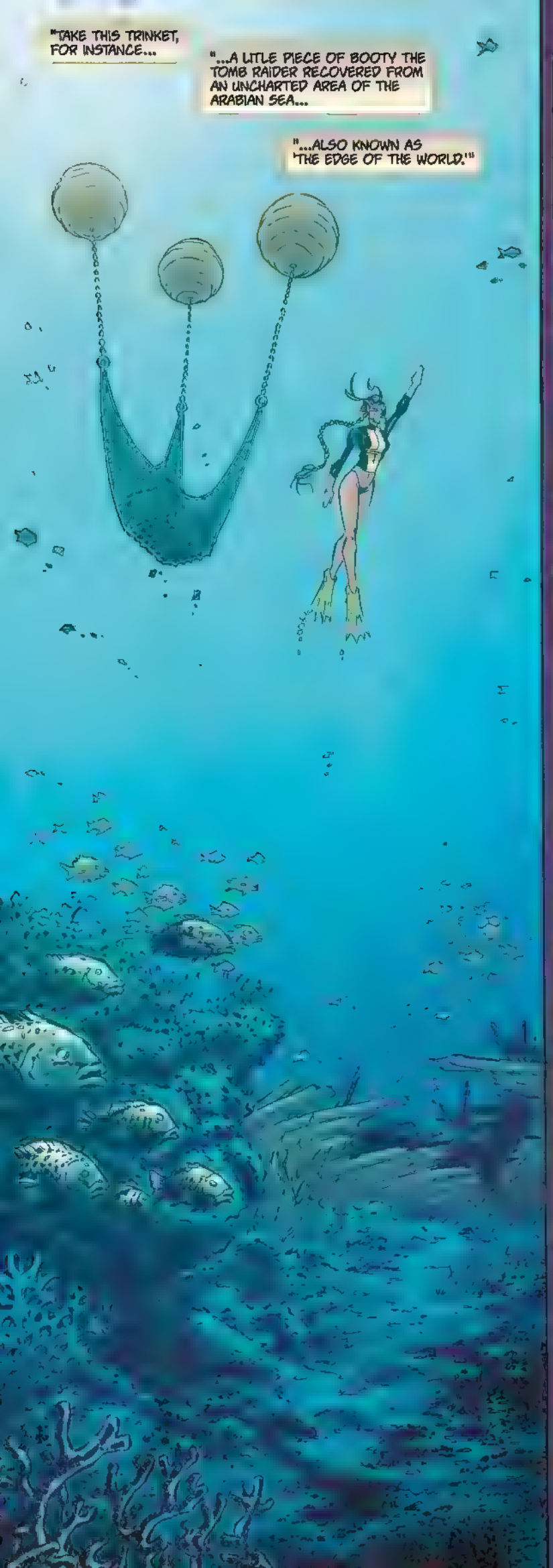

And here it is. On view with the rest of the Croft Collection.
For one last time.
EXCUSE ME, MISS. BUT WHY IS THAT?
Because after today, the museum will be closed. Permanently. In fact, this is our final tour.
Today the Global Alliance will enact a new law...
...stating that all antiquities must be returned to their countries of origin.
So tomorrow, everything you see here will be gone.
Fortunately, some things can NEVER be taken away. Listen. Do you hear that melody that's been playing?
It's Schubert's Eight Symphony. One of Lady Croft's most favorite pieces... of treasure.
QUITE THE MUSIC BOX YOU'VE BUILT FOR YOURSELF, VON BRUIN.
THE FIRST TWO MOVEMENTS? LOVELY. THOUGH SOMETHING TELLS ME THE THIRD WILL BE ONE TO DIE FOR.
YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE FOLLOWED ME DOWN HERE, DR. CROFT.
THIS SONG IS MINE! FOR MY EARS ALONE!

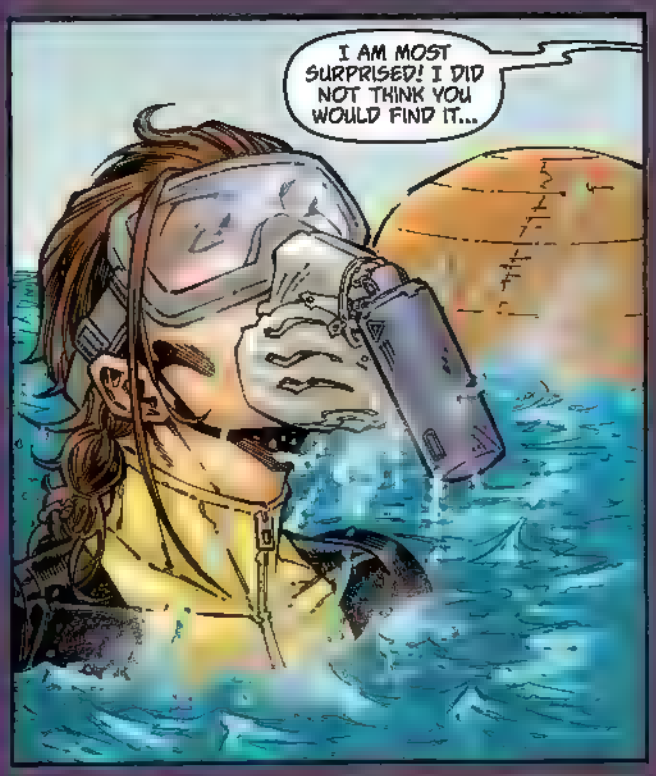

WELL, I HAVE TO SAY I ENJOY WHAT I'VE HEARD SO FAR.
A PITY YOU VON'T HEAR HOW IT ENDS. BECAUSE THE ONLY VAY YOU'LL KEEP ALIVE...
...IS TO KEEP TIME...
AND TO DO THAT YOU'LL HAVE TO KNOW VHERE EACH 'NOTE' FALLS ON EACH BAR.
FAIR ENOUGH. SO IF I CAN CARRY THE TUNE...
...IT'LL CARRY ME?
EASIER SAID THAN DONE, CROFT.
FOR AGES THIS VORK HAS STAYED HERE IN VIENNA-- IN MY FAMILY.
IT IS INGRAINED IN MY SOUL. BUT TO YOU, AND THE REST OF THE VORLD...
...THIS VILL ALVAYS BE KNOVN AS SCHUBERT'S UNFINISHED SYMPHONY!

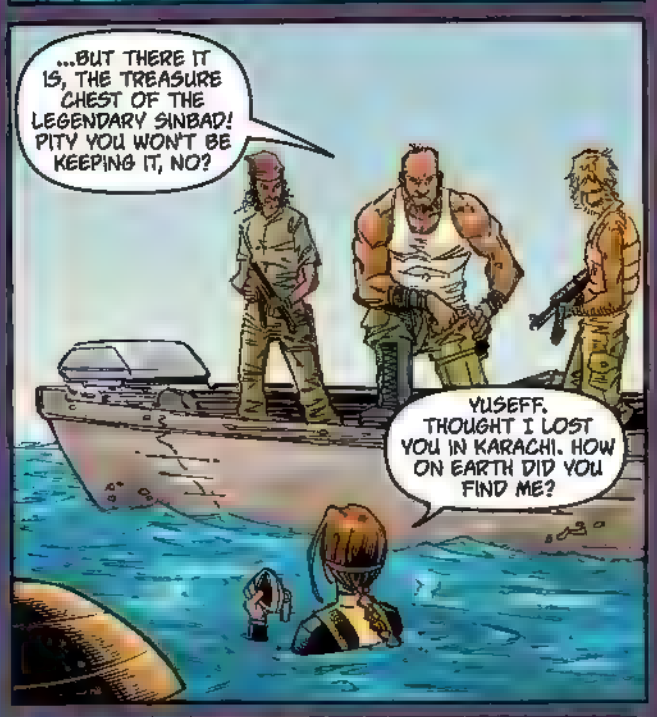
GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO PLAY IT BY EAR THEN.
IMPOSSIBLE!
THERE'S NO WAY YOU SHOULD HAVE MADE IT! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
BELIEVE WHATEVER YOU LIKE, LUV. EITHER WAY...
...I'M PINCHING THAT SHEET MUSIC.
B-BUT HOW DID YOU...?
REMEMBER OUR FIRST EVENING TOGETHER?
JA?
YOU HUM IN YOUR SLEEP.
WHAK!
Through the ages many have branded the Tomb Raider as a thief.
But Lara never hoarded any artifacts. She uncovered them. She shared them with the world.
It's BECAUSE of her adventures that the people of our century have heard this music...

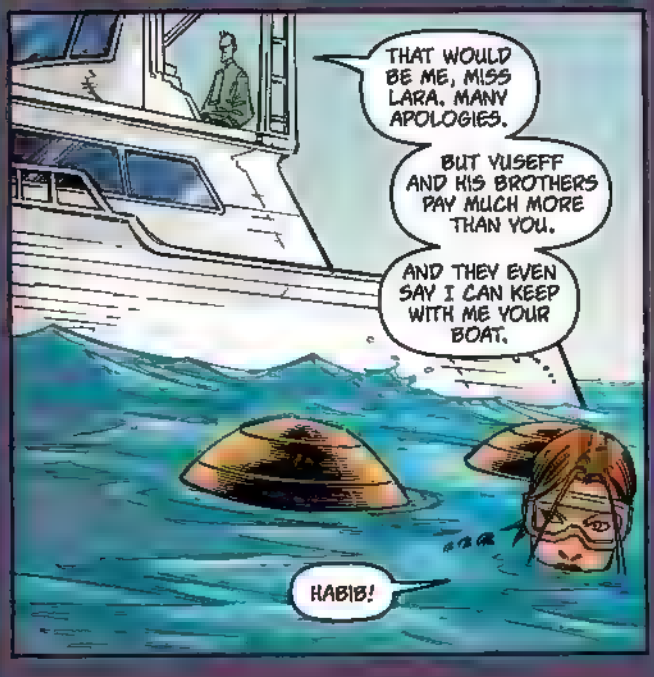
...Seen the composer's original manuscript...
And all of the other MANY wonders that you've witnessed here.
She brought these things up out of the tombs for US.
For ALL of us.
So as you leave, please remember what you've seen and heard today.
Just like the music, no one can ever take away your memory of this moment in time.
It's yours as long as you value it.
Thank you for visiting the Croft Museum. I was Polly Gon, your tour guide. Goodbye.
THOUGHT THEY'D NEVER LEAVE.
ONE OF YOU TWO GIVE ME A PERIMETER SWEEP.

COAST IS CLEAR, SLATE. WE'RE IN.
OH, WE'RE NOT IN YET, PET. WE HAVEN'T EVEN SCRATCHED THE SURFACE.
SUB-SPECTRAL GOGS: ON.
"THERE WE ARE. FAR WALL, BEHIND THE PORTRAIT OF HER PARENTS."
KLIK!
LADIES, YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE ME EARN MY REP.
SERIOUSLY NOW, CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING MORE INTENSE...
...THAN RAIDING LARA CROFT'S TOMB?
WHAT NOW?
LASER GRID. NO PROBLEM. STICK WITH ME AND FOLLOW THE CODE.
CODE?
UP. UP. LEFT. DOWN.
RIGHT. DOWN. DOWN.
UP. LEFT. LEFT. UP.
BIT OF TWENTY-CEN. NOSTALGIA. CROFT CALLED IT HER "NUDE CODE."
ONLY WAY TO SEE HER *REAL* "GOODIES."
THIS, MY DEARS, IS WHAT THE PUBLIC DOESN'T GET TO SEE.
AND BELIEVE YOU ME, THIS STUFF-- IT'S MAGIC!


"TAKE THIS TRINKET, FOR INSTANCE...
"...A LITLE PIECE OF BOOTY THE TOMB RAIDER RECOVERED FROM AN UNCHARTED AREA OF THE ARABIAN SEA...
"...ALSO KNOWN AS 'THE EDGE OF THE WORLD.'"


I AM MOST SURPRISED! I DID NOT THINK YOU WOULD FIND IT...


...BUT THERE IT IS, THE TREASURE CHEST OF THE LEGENDARY SINBAD! PITY YOU WON'T BE KEEPING IT, NO?
YUSEFF. THOUGHT I LOST YOU IN KARACHI. HOW ON EARTH DID YOU FIND ME?


THAT WOULD BE ME, MISS LARA. MANY APOLOGIES.
BUT YUSEFF AND HIS BROTHERS PAY MUCH MORE THAN YOU.
AND THEY EVEN SAY I CAN KEEP WITH ME YOUR BOAT.
HABIB!

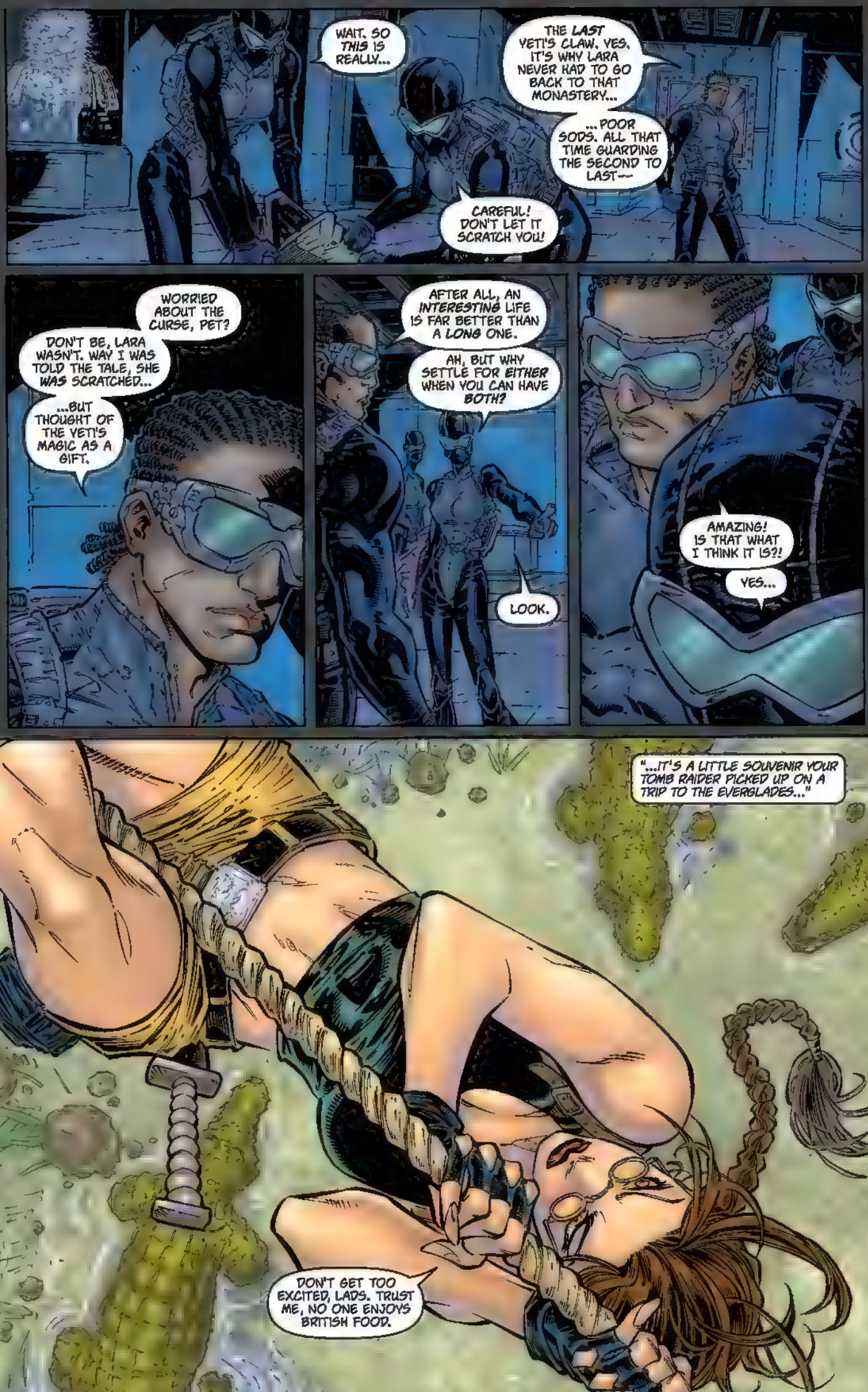
ACTUALLY, HABIB, I SAID WHEN OUR TRANSACTION WAS OVER...
...IT WOULD BE WAITING FOR YOU. AND I AM SURE IT WILL BE...
CLICK!
BWA CHOOM!
...IN PARADISE!
HA HA HA!
THE ENGLISH WOMAN! WHERE DID SHE GO?
FORGET HER. WE ARE IN MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN. SHE HAS NO BOAT. SHE IS DONE FOR.
COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS. SHE SAVED US COST OF A BULLET.
NOW GATHER THE TREASURE!
FINE. TAKE IT.
WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW, EFENDI...
...IS THAT YOU JUST PASSED UP THE REAL TREASURE CHEST.

"SEE, MY PETS, THE WILY LADY CROFT HAD ALREADY STASHED THE BEST PART OF THE TAKE ON HER VERY AMPLE PERSON.
AHHH!
"SINBAD'S VERY OWN ASTROLABE.
"AN ANCIENT MARINER'S DEVICE FOR GETTING ONE'S BEARINGS AT SEA. AND THIS ONE?
"THIS ONE COULD PULL OFF QUITE A TRICK OR TWO— GIVEN YOU KNOW THE RIGHT 'MAGIC WORDS.'
قطعة أرض
"SURE IT WAS A LONG SWIM, BUT LARA WAS IN GOOD SHAPE, HAVING SWUM THE CHANNEL A TIME OR TWO.
"BREAST STROKE. OR SO I'M TOLD.
"OKAY, THAT LAST BIT WAS JUST A LAFF. SERIOUSLY THOUGHT?"
THIS SWEET NUMBER GOT HER SAFELY TO LAND...
...WHILE YUSEFF AND HIS BROTHERS WERE LOST AT SEA, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN.
BET THAT MADE THEM FEEL RIGHT STUPID FOR BLOWING UP A BOAT FULL OF HI-TECH NAV EQUIPMENT.
ANYWAYS, THIS HERE WAS ALWAYS ONE A' LARA'S FAVORITES.
SUPPOSEDLY SHE'D SAY THE GREATEST TREASURE OF ALL— WAS ALWAYS HAVING A DIRECTION.
SLATE? I THINK THE LABEL ON THIS ONE'S OFF. SAYS IT'S THE YETI'S CLAW. BUT I'VE SEEN THE YETI'S CLAW, AND THIS AIN'T IT.

"AH. I KNOW THE ONE YOU MEAN, DARLING. IT'S GOT A JEWEL-ENCRUSTED HANDLE...
"CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM...
"ON LOAN FROM TIBET OR SOMEWHERES, RIGHT?
"WELL, STORY GOES OUR LARA HAD HER HANDS ON THAT ONE TOO...
EASY... ALMOST THERE...
"SHE 'LIBERATED' THE THING FROM THE MONASTERY OF THE WANING MOON...
FWUMP!
FWUMP!
"A HOLY ORDER OF WARRIOR MONKS WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE IN LIFE...
THUK!
THWOK!
TAKK!
OKAY, BOYS. I GET YOUR POINT. NO NEED TO OVERDO IT.

"...WAS TO ENSURE THAT THAT CLAW WOULD NEVER FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS."
POOMF!
IT'S A FAIR COP. YOU GOT ME. HERE, YOU CAN HAVE IT BACK.
FOR YOUR SAKE, TELL ME THERE IS NO SCRATCH.
IT'S FINE. REALLY. GOOD AS NEW.
NOT ON THE CLAW, GIRL, ON YOU. THE CLAW OF THE LAST YETI BEARS A TERRIBLE CURSE IF IT SCRATCHES YOU.
IT DOOMS ONE TO LIVE OUT THEIR LIFE IN INTERESTING TIMES.
FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE AND TRANQUILITY, WE MUST KEEP IT AWAY FROM ALL LIVING THINGS.
PLEASE FORGIVE THE NECESSITY OF OUR ATTACK.
NO HARM DONE.
NICE FELLOWS. GOOD SHOTS, TOO.
HMM. I COULD TRY TO GET THE THING LATER. FALL BACK ON MY USUAL 'PLAN B.'
BUT HOW WOULD I LIVE WITH MYSELF AFTER?...

FWUMP!
WHAT? MORE OF YOU UNDER FOOT?
LOOK, DEARS, I'VE ALREADY GIVEN BACK YOUR STUPID YETI'S CL—
RWARRR!
AH. RIGHT THEN...
PLAN B.
"B" FOR "BANG," BLOODY BANG, BANG, BANG!


WAIT. SO THIS IS REALLY...
THE LAST YETI'S CLAW. YES. IT'S WHY LARA NEVER HAD TO GO BACK TO THAT MONASTERY...
...POOR SODS. ALL THAT TIME GUARDING THE SECOND TO LAST—
CAREFUL! DON'T LET IT SCRATCH YOU!
WORRIED ABOUT THE CURSE, PET?
DON'T BE, LARA WASN'T. WAY I WAS TOLD THE TALE, SHE WAS SCRATCHED...
...BUT THOUGHT OF THE YETI'S MAGIC AS A GIFT.
AFTER ALL, AN INTERESTING LIFE IS FAR BETTER THAN A LONG ONE.
AH, BUT WHY SETTLE FOR EITHER WHEN YOU CAN HAVE BOTH?
LOOK.
AMAZING! IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?!
YES...
"...IT'S A LITTLE SOUVENIR YOUR TOMB RAIDER PICKED UP ON A TRIP TO THE EVERGLADES..."
DON'T GET TOO EXCITED, LADS. TRUST ME, NO ONE ENJOYS BRITISH FOOD.

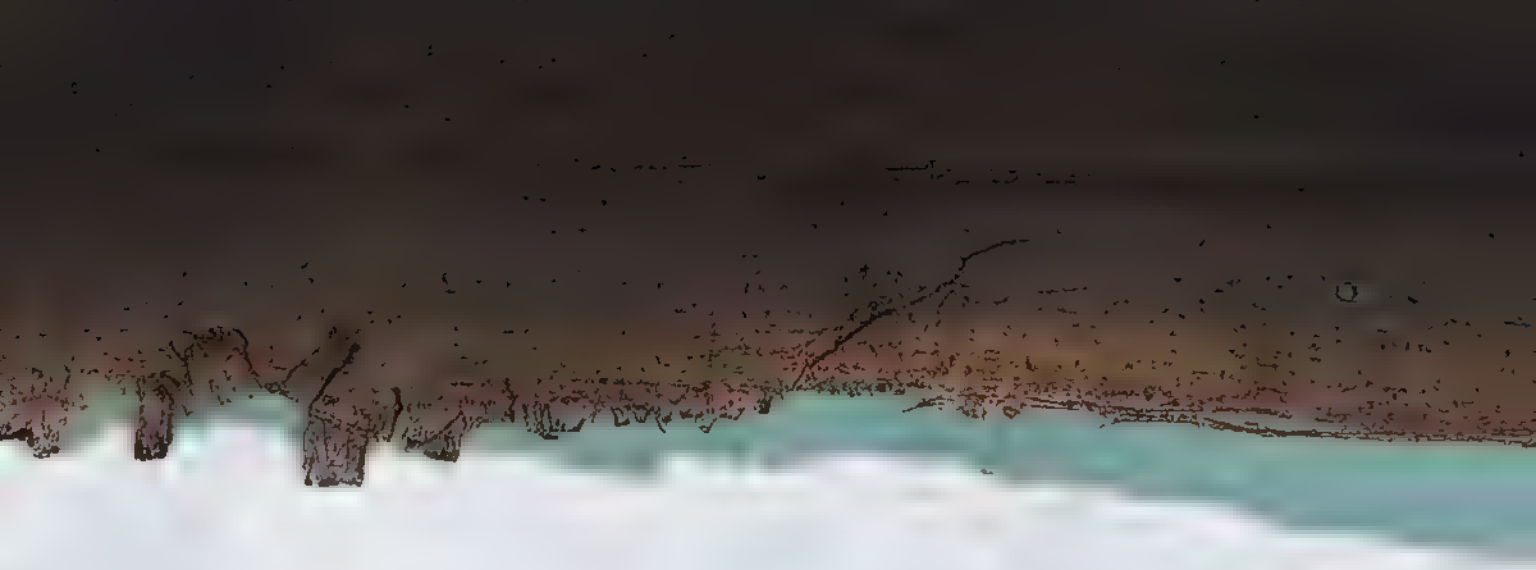
THOUGH I HAVE TO ADMIT, AFTER SLOGGING IT FOR A FEW HOURS, I COULD DO WITH A BITE MYSELF.
SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT MAP I STOLE FROM VARGAS WAS A FAKE.
EITHER THAT OR MY SPANISH IS A LITTLE...
...RUSTY?
<TO ARMS! KILL THE WENCH!>
<AN OUTSIDER! WE HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED!>
NO. NO NEED FOR A BERLITZ REFRESHER.
I UNDERSTOOD THAT QUITE WELL ENOUGH, THANK YOU.
BANG!

(F-F-FOOLISH WOMAN...)
(YOU HAVE COME ALL THIS WAY.)
(YOU HAVE SOUGHT THIS PRIZE.)
(SURELY YOU MUST KNOW, THE WATER OF THIS FOUNTAIN...)
(...GRANTS ETERNAL YOUTH!)
(AND WITH IT, ETERNAL LIFE!)
(AS LONG AS WE DRINK FROM IT, WE SHALL LIVE FOREVER!)
(BUT YOU? YOU SHALL DIE!)
IS THAT SO? THEN TELL ME THIS...
HOW DO YOU BOYS PLAN TO CARRY ON DRINKING...
...WITHOUT ANY THROATS?

WAIT! EVERYTHING I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU...ALL THESE STORIES...
THEY'RE SECRETS THAT'VE STAYED IN MY FAMILY FOR AGES!
SO HOW COULD YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS ONE AND I DON'T?!
BECAUSE I DIDN'T JUST BRING THAT JUG BACK, LUV. I DRANK FROM IT TOO.
UNFLIPPIN'-BELIEVABLE, MATE! YOU'RE LARA CROFT?!
YOU MEAN TO SAY YOU'RE MY GREAT, GREAT, GREAT, GREAT GRAN?!!
IN THE FLESH. AND, SAD TO SAY, WITH A FEW MORE 'GREATS' THROWN IN.
BUT WHY? WHY SNEAK INTO MY CREW? AND WHY HELP ME RAID YOUR OWN TOMB?
FOR THREE VERY GOOD REASONS, SLATE...
ONE: TO SEE IF YOU COULD PULL IT OFF. TO SEE IF THERE'S ANY OF THE CROFT BLOOD IN YOU.
AND THERE IS, SON. MADE AN OLD TOMB RAIDER PROUD.
TH-THANKS.
AND THEN WE COME TO TWO.
WHILE SOME TREASURES WE SHARE WITH THE WORLD, WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT OTHERS NEVER FALL INTO THE WRONG---
HOLD ON. I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

KRASHH!
WAS WONDERING WHERE I LEFT THESE.
REEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
REEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
WHAT'VE YOU DONE! THERE GOES EVERY SODDING ALARM IN THE PLACE!
RIGHT. AND NOW WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY OUT.
WHICH BRINGS US TO THREE. THE REAL REASON WE DO THIS, AND WHY I'M GOING TO KEEP ON DOING THIS FOREVER AND EVER...
BECAUSE IT'S FUN!
NEVER THE END...

TRIPPED UP
FINCH
D-TRON
JOSMITH
2000



SCRIPT
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LETTERS
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DAVID FINCH

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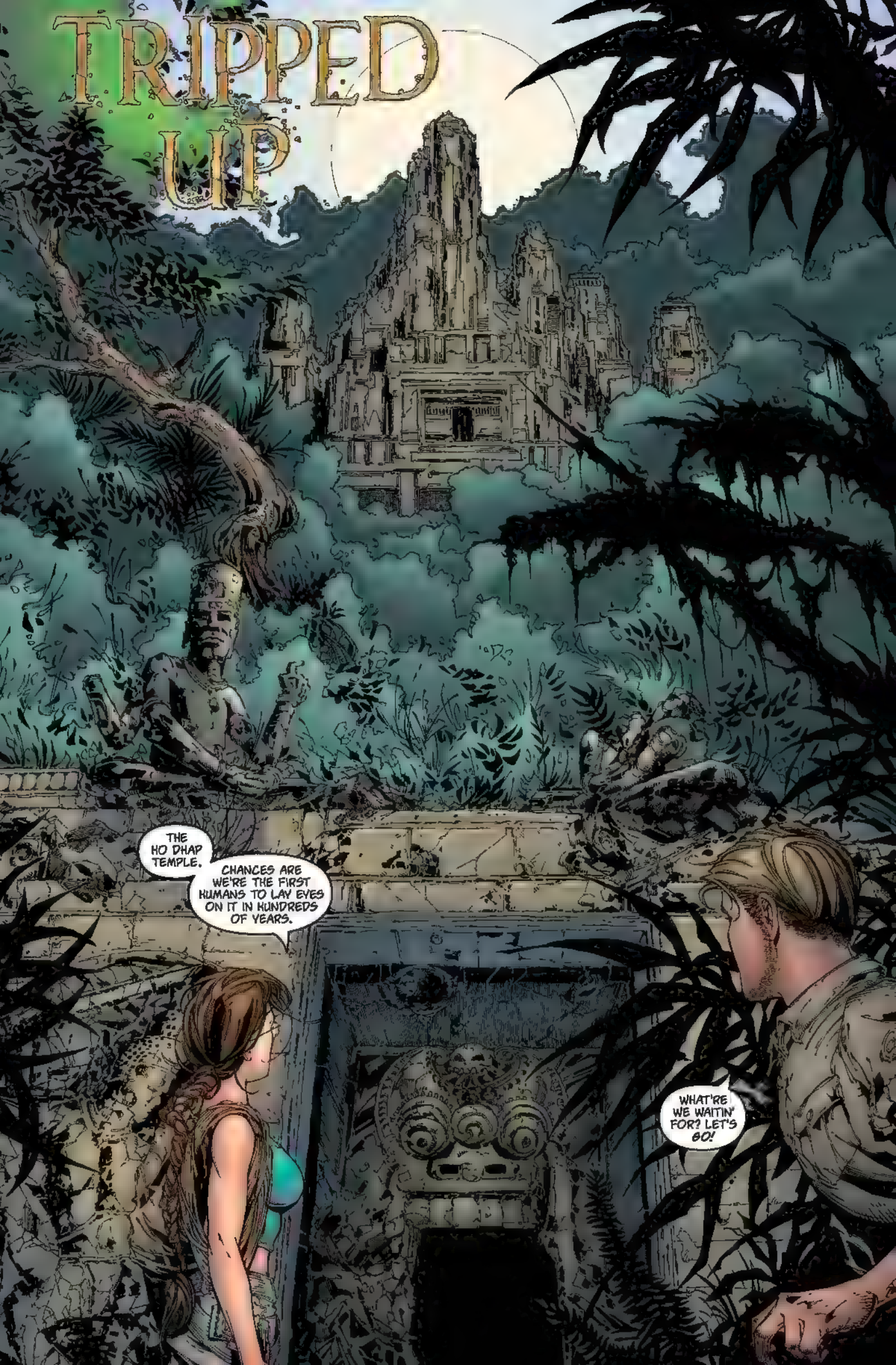
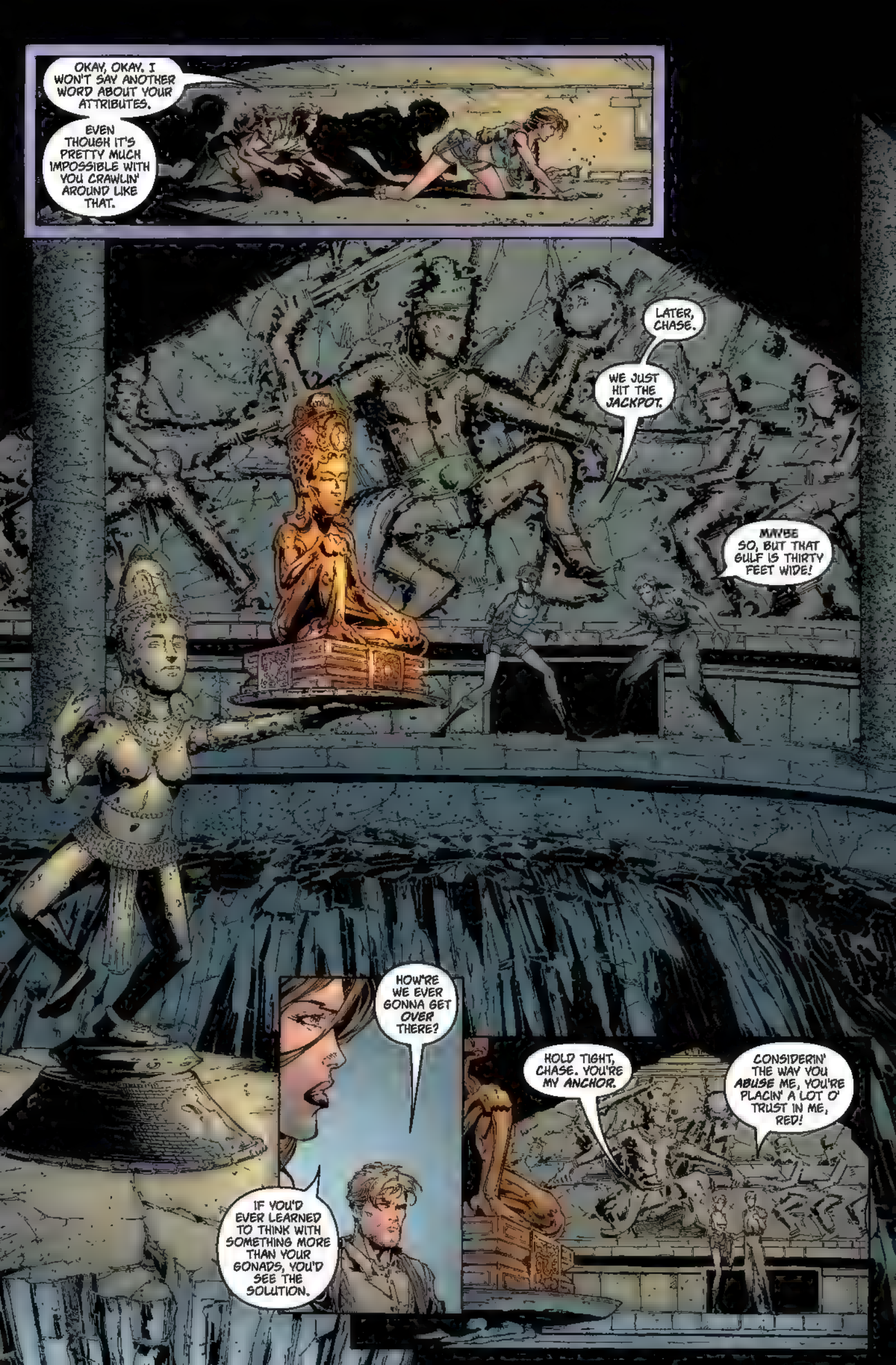
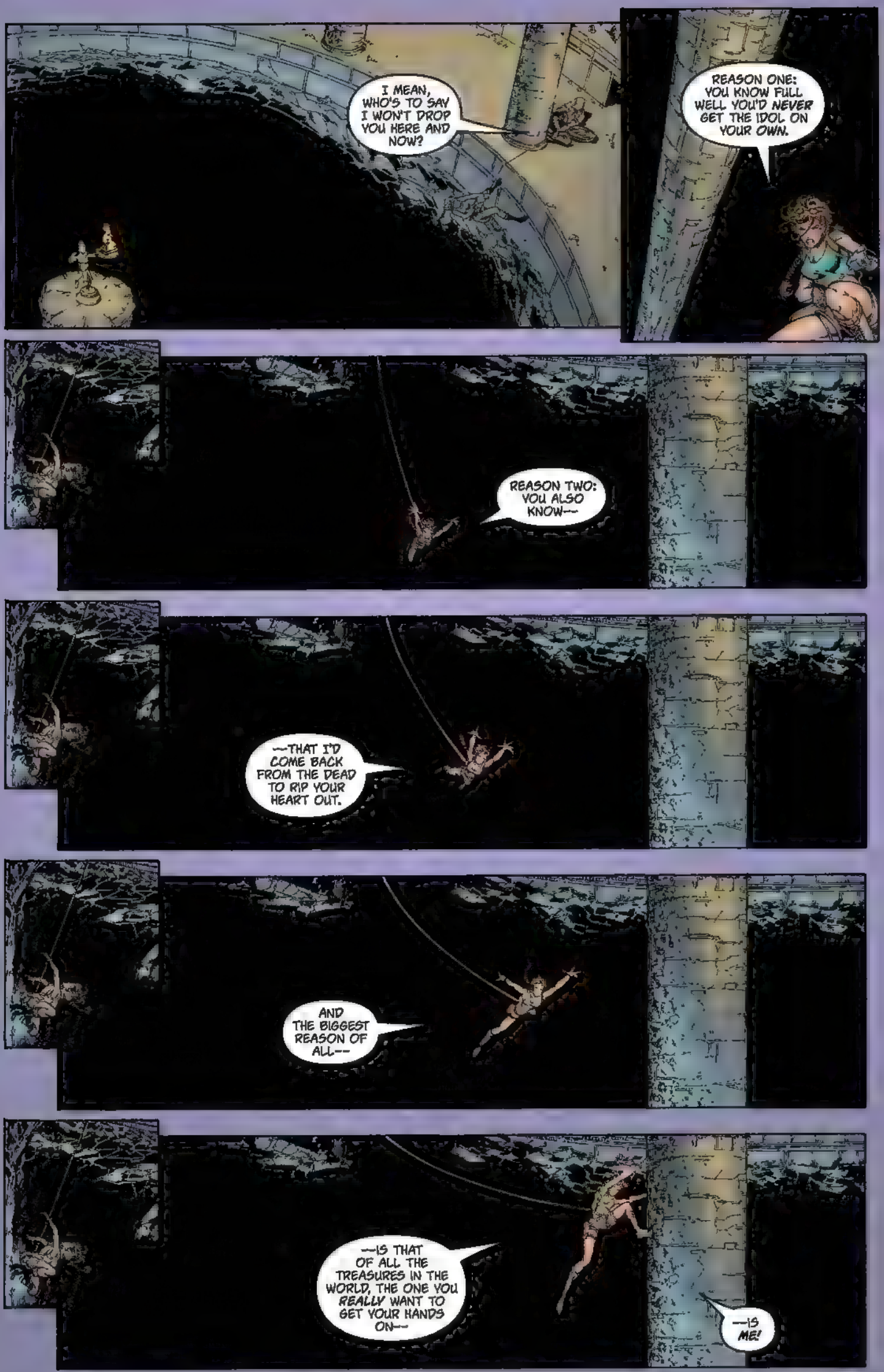
JONATHAN D. SMITH

I'M LARA CROFT. IF IT'S UNIQUE OR EXCITING, I GO AFTER IT.
CHASE CARVER IS A TREASURE HUNTER. HE'S ALSO A ROGUE WHO CHEATS AT POKER AND LOVE. THOSE ARE HIS GOOD POINTS.
WE'RE DEEP IN CAMBODIA. IF THERE'S A HOTTER, MORE HUMID PLACE ON EARTH—
—I'VE YET TO FIND IT.
THE TREASURE WON'T BE COMIN' TO US, DARLIN'. MIGHT AS WELL PUSH ON.
THE LU VINH IDOL. IN ALL OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, THERE MAY NOT BE A MORE SOUGHT AFTER OBJECT.
WHICH IS WHY WE OUGHTA KEEP IT, RED!
ESPECIALLY SINCE HACKIN' OUR WAY THROUGH THIS STEAMY JUNGLE IS ABOUT AS PLEASANT—
—AS GETTIN' A TOOTH DRILLED WITH A HAMMER AND NAIL!
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME ALONG, CHASE.
LARA, M'GIRL, I'D CROSS HELL ITSELF TO LAY HANDS ON THE LU VINH.
TAKE A LOOK.
YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET YOUR CHANCE.

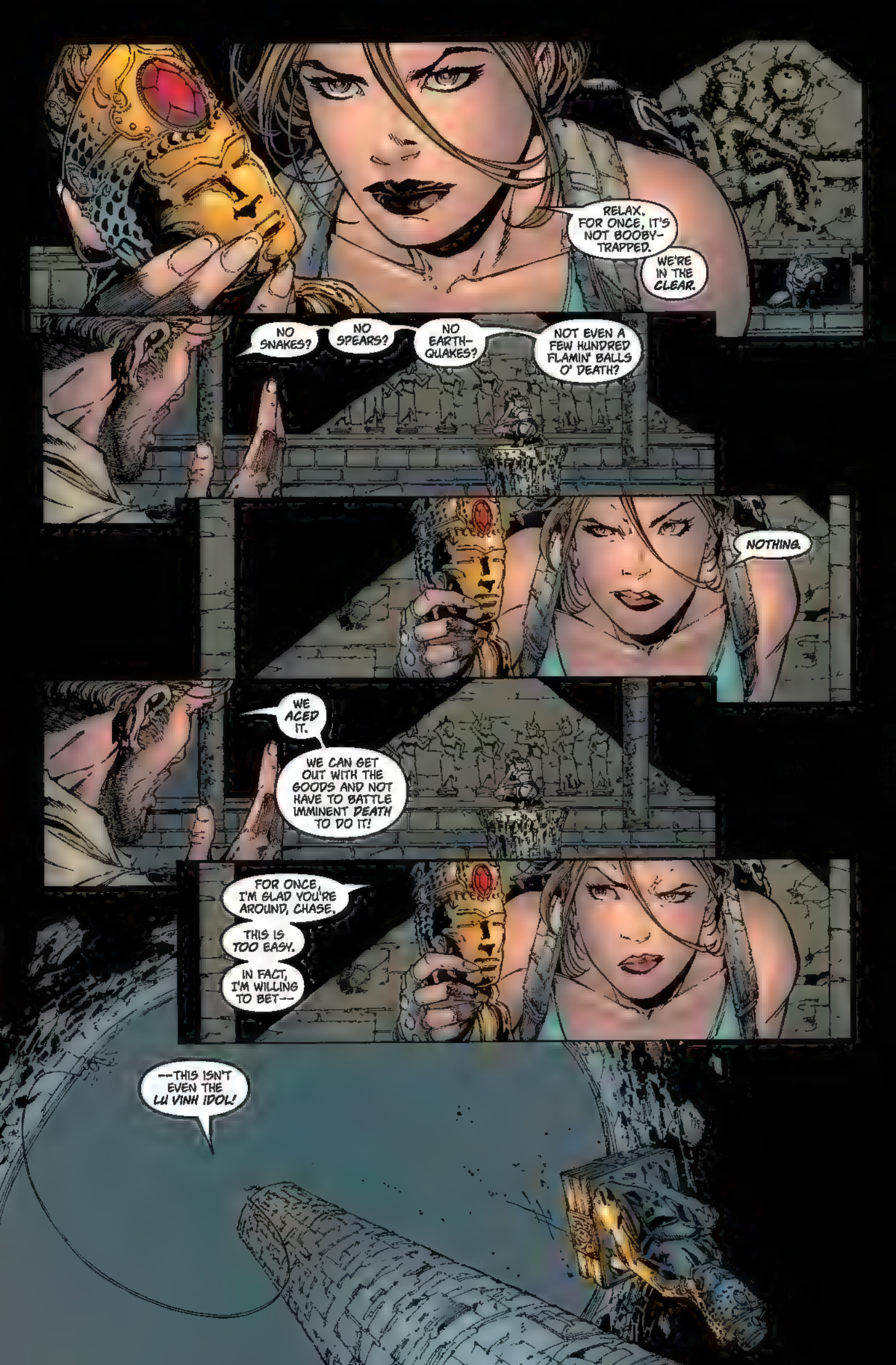

TRIPPED UP
THE HO DHAP TEMPLE.
CHANCES ARE WE'RE THE FIRST HUMANS TO LAY EYES ON IT IN HUNDREDS OF YEARS.
WHAT'RE WE WAITIN' FOR? LET'S GO!

YOU REALLY THINK YOU'LL NEED THAT?
I'M NOT A ROOKIE, CHASE.
BASED ON MY VAST EXPERIENCE IN MATTERS SUCH AS THIS---
---YES.
I ALREADY HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS PLACE.
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF IT AT ALL.
TOO BAD, CUZ I REALLY LIKE WHAT I'M LOOKIN' AT.
EASY, MR. CARVER. WE'RE A LONG, LONG WAY FROM HOME.
YOUR BODY WOULD NEVER BE FOUND.


OKAY, OKAY. I WON'T SAY ANOTHER WORD ABOUT YOUR ATTRIBUTES.
EVEN THOUGH IT'S PRETTY MUCH IMPOSSIBLE WITH YOU CRAWLIN' AROUND LIKE THAT.
LATER, CHASE.
WE JUST HIT THE JACKPOT.
MAYBE SO, BUT THAT GULF IS THIRTY FEET WIDE!
HOW'RE WE EVER GONNA GET OVER THERE?
IF YOU'D EVER LEARNED TO THINK WITH SOMETHING MORE THAN YOUR GONADS, YOU'D SEE THE SOLUTION.
HOLD TIGHT, CHASE. YOU'RE MY ANCHOR.
CONSIDERIN' THE WAY YOU ABUSE ME, YOU'RE PLACIN' A LOT O' TRUST IN ME, RED!


I MEAN, WHO'S TO SAY I WON'T DROP YOU HERE AND NOW?
REASON ONE: YOU KNOW FULL WELL YOU'D NEVER GET THE IDOL ON YOUR OWN.
REASON TWO: YOU ALSO KNOW--
--THAT I'D COME BACK FROM THE DEAD TO RIP YOUR HEART OUT.
AND THE BIGGEST REASON OF ALL--
--IS THAT OF ALL THE TREASURES IN THE WORLD, THE ONE YOU REALLY WANT TO GET YOUR HANDS ON--
--IS ME!

PERFECT. I KNEW THESE WERE GOOD FOR MORE THAN KEEPING YOU AT ARM'S LENGTH.
COME TO LARA.
THIS IS ABOUT THE TIME I START GETTIN' WORRIED, RED!
SEEMS IT'S RIGHT ABOUT NOW THAT POISONOUS SPEARS START FLYING OR AN EARTHQUAKE GETS TRIGGERED!
SO FAR, SO GOOD. NOTHING.
AND THE IDOL IS MINE.
YOU TOUCHED IT! THAT'S IT!
GET READY FOR THE HORDE O' SPIDERS OR NERVE GAS OR WHATEVER IS COMIN'!

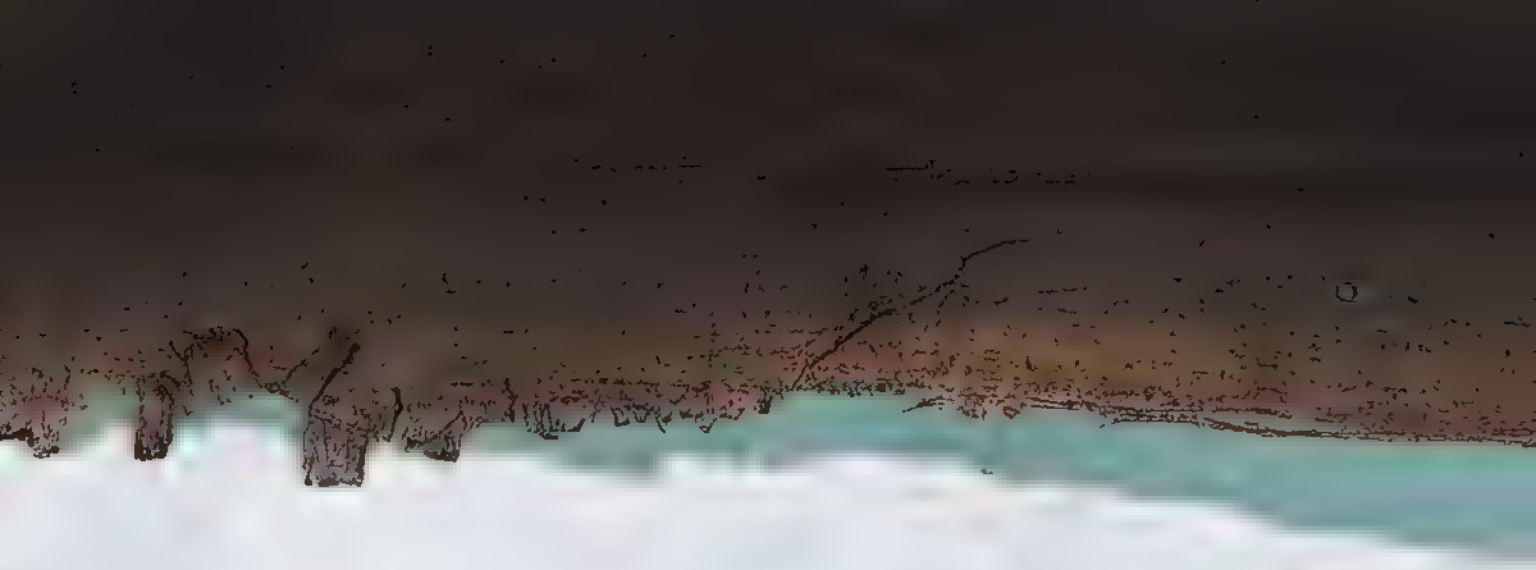

RELAX. FOR ONCE, IT'S NOT BOOBY-TRAPPED.
WE'RE IN THE CLEAR.
NO SNAKES?
NO SPEARS?
NO EARTH-QUAKES?
NOT EVEN A FEW HUNDRED FLAMIN' BALLS O' DEATH?
NOTHING.
WE ACED IT.
WE CAN GET OUT WITH THE GOODS AND NOT HAVE TO BATTLE IMMINENT DEATH TO DO IT!
FOR ONCE, I'M GLAD YOU'RE AROUND, CHASE.
THIS IS TOO EASY.
IN FACT, I'M WILLING TO BET---
--THIS ISN'T EVEN THE LU VINH IDOL!

THIS IS.
SO PLAIN ITS WORSHIPPERS FIGURED IT WOULD NEVER GET TAKEN.
DEFILER OF THE GODS!
HERETIC!
I WAS RIGHT!
FOR YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS--
--YOU SHALL DIE!
NOW THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!
PULL UP, CHASE!
GIVE IT ALL YOU HAVE--
--OR NEITHER OF US WILL GET WHAT WE WANT!

YOU COULDN'T LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE, COULD YOU?
WE COULDA TOLD THE MUSEUM THE FAKE WAS THE REAL IDOL AND THEY NEVER WOULDA KNOWN THE DIFFERENCE!
WELL, I WOULD HAVE!
SINNER!
FOR DEFILING THE TEMPLE, I'LL SUCK THE MARROW FROM YOUR BONES AS YOU WATCH!
I GUESS THAT MEANS—
—YOU SUCK.
B-DAM! B-DAMM!
MOVE, CARVER! WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!

YOU'LL GET NO ARGUMENT FROM ME!
YOU SHOULD BE PROUD OF YOURSELF, CHASE!
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'LL GIVE ME A BIGGER CUT O' THE MUSEUM'S FINDING FEE?
IF NOT FOR YOU I WOULD HAVE LEFT THE REAL IDOL BEHIND!
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
AND THAT YOU'LL BE EXTRA SPECIAL NICE TO ME, DARLIN'?
MAYBE EVEN... ROMANTIC?
NOT A CHANCE.
DARLIN'.
THE END.

TOMB RAIDER #0
CHING
LIAMAS
JD SMITH
2001



SCRIPT
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LETTERS
DREAMER DESIGN, ROBIN SPEHAR,
AND DENNIS HEISLER

COVER PENCILS
BRIAN CHING

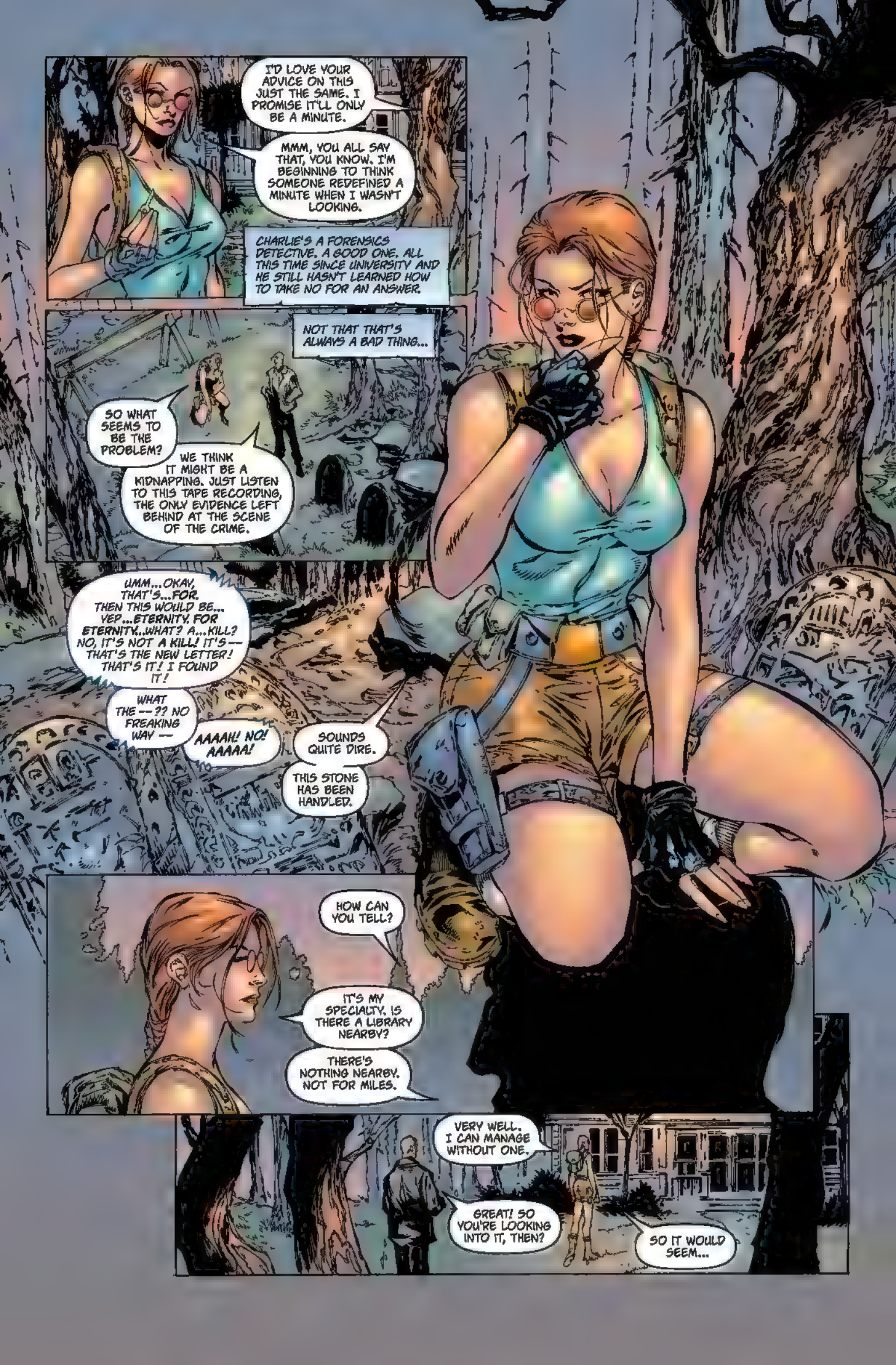
COVER INKS
VICTOR LLAMAS

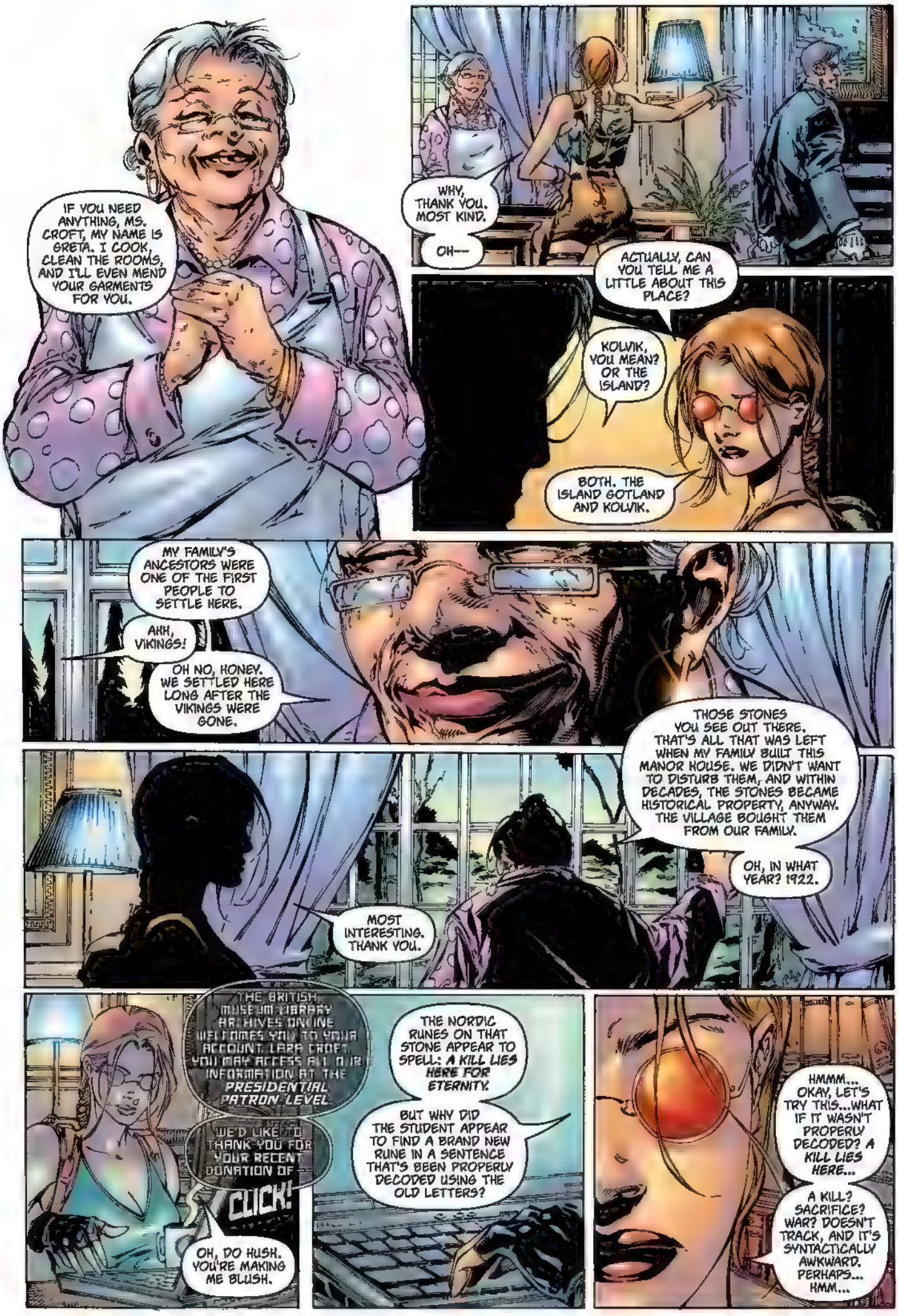
COVER COLORS
JONATHAN D. SMITH

JOURNAL ENTRY: DAY FOURTEEN. AFTER SEVERAL TRANSLATION ATTEMPTS AND ENOUGH RESEARCH ON VIKING PHONETICS TO STUN A PIT BULL —
— I'VE FINALLY DETERMINED THE MISSING CHARACTER. THAT'S A BIG A+ FOR ME AND A BIG "UP YOURS" TO THE REVIEW COMMITTEE IF I CAN LOCATE THE CHARACTER ON ANY EXISTING STONES.
JUST ONE STONE WITH THE NEW LETTER AND I HAVE THE WHOLE THESIS LOCKED DOWN.
652 SITES AND COUNTING. IT HAD BETTER BE HERE.
UMM...OKAY, THAT'S...FOR. THEN THIS WOULD BE... YEP...ETERNITY. FOR ETERNITY...WHAT? A...KILL?
NO, IT'S NOT A KILL! IT'S — THAT'S THE NEW LETTER! THAT'S IT! I FOUND IT!
UCLA
UCLA

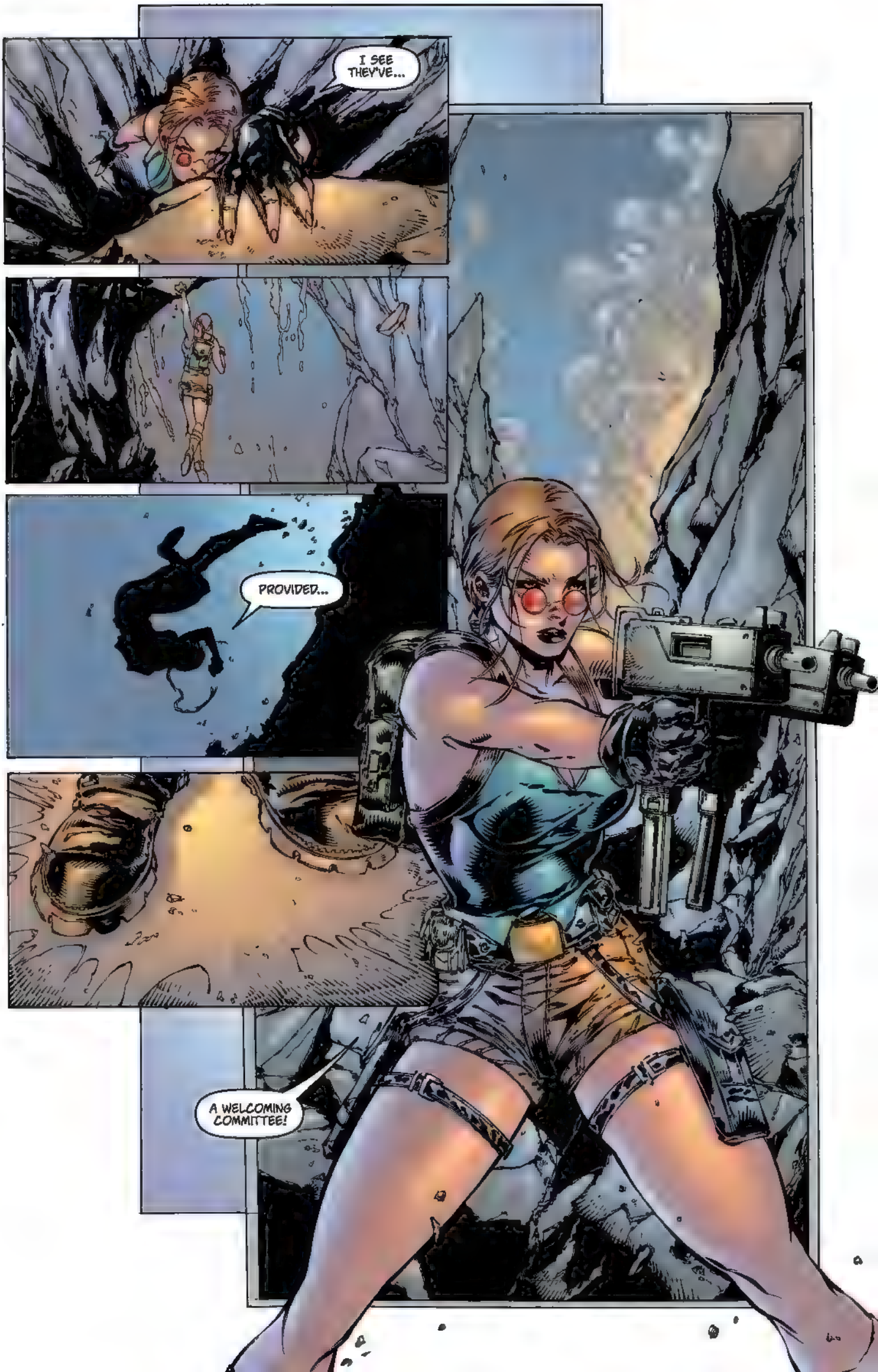
WHAT THE—??
...NO FREAKING WAY...
SCREEEEEEEEEEECH!
AAAH! NO! AAAAAA!
HELP ME! SOMEBODY — HELP!!!
SOMEBODY HELP ME!

I HAVE THREE DAYS BEFORE MY NEXT FLIGHT TO TIBET. THREE DAYS IN WHICH TO ACTUALLY RELAX. SO I DECIDED TO SPEND THOSE THREE DAYS IN A QUIET SPOT.
I ASKED THE LOCALS IF THERE WERE ANY GOOD BED-AND-BREAKFASTS IN THE AREA. THEY POINTED ME TO KOLVIK.
I CAN'T WAIT TO HAVE SOME QUIET TIME. THE KIND OF QUIET TIME WHEN IT'S JUST ME. NOT ME AND MUMMIES, NOT ME AND THE SCORPIONS, NOT ME AND WILD BOARS, BADGERS, SNAKES, SPIDERS AND CPAS.
YOU KNOW. QUALITY QUIET TIME.
LARA?! LARA CROFT! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME!
CHARLIE...?
CHARLIE BASCOM! IT'S BEEN TOO LONG. GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, OLD FELLOW.
WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A MYSTERY. BUT YOU MUST KNOW ALL ABOUT THAT IF YOU'RE HERE.
NO, IT'S... ACTUALLY, I'M RATHER ON A BREAK. I'D --

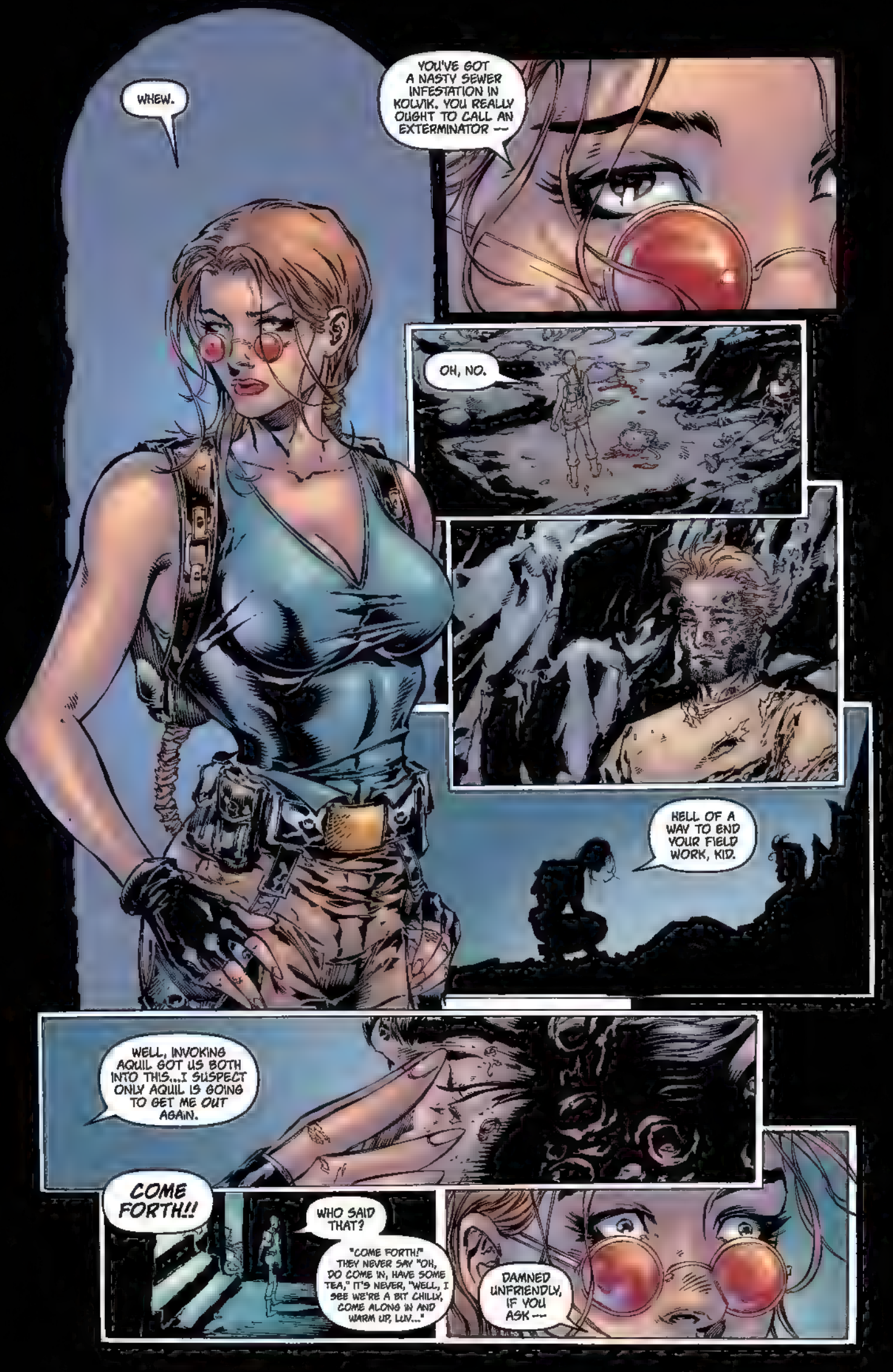

I'D LOVE YOUR ADVICE ON THIS JUST THE SAME. I PROMISE IT'LL ONLY BE A MINUTE.
MMM, YOU ALL SAY THAT, YOU KNOW. I'M BEGINNING TO THINK SOMEONE REDEFINED A MINUTE WHEN I WASN'T LOOKING.
CHARLIE'S A FORENSICS DETECTIVE. A GOOD ONE. ALL THIS TIME SINCE UNIVERSITY AND HE STILL HASN'T LEARNED HOW TO TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER.
NOT THAT THAT'S ALWAYS A BAD THING...
SO WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?
WE THINK IT MIGHT BE A KIDNAPPING. JUST LISTEN TO THIS TAPE RECORDING, THE ONLY EVIDENCE LEFT BEHIND AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME.
UMM...OKAY, THAT'S...FOR. THEN THIS WOULD BE... YEP...ETERNITY. FOR ETERNITY...WHAT? A...KILL? NO, IT'S NOT A KILL! IT'S— THAT'S THE NEW LETTER! THAT'S IT! I FOUND IT!
WHAT THE—?? NO FREAKING WAY—
AAAAH! NO! AAAAA!
SOUNDS QUITE DIRE.
THIS STONE HAS BEEN HANDLED.
HOW CAN YOU TELL?
IT'S MY SPECIALTY. IS THERE A LIBRARY NEARBY?
THERE'S NOTHING NEARBY. NOT FOR MILES.
VERY WELL. I CAN MANAGE WITHOUT ONE.
GREAT! SO YOU'RE LOOKING INTO IT, THEN?
SO IT WOULD SEEM...

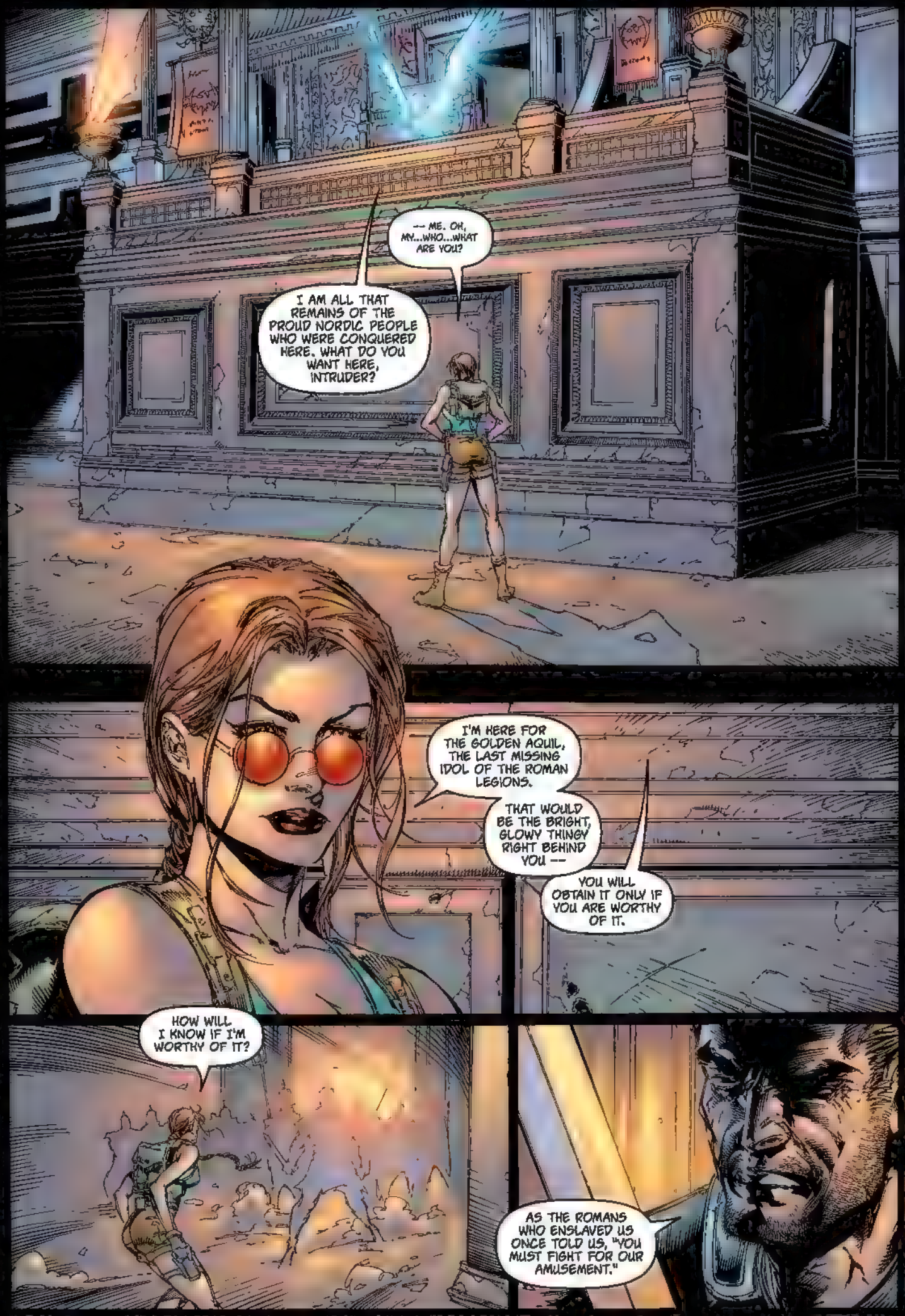

IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, MS. CROFT, MY NAME IS GRETA. I COOK, CLEAN THE ROOMS, AND I'LL EVEN MEND YOUR GARMENTS FOR YOU.
WHY, THANK YOU. MOST KIND.
OH--
ACTUALLY, CAN YOU TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT THIS PLACE?
KOLVIK, YOU MEAN? OR THE ISLAND?
BOTH. THE ISLAND GOTLAND AND KOLVIK.
MY FAMILY'S ANCESTORS WERE ONE OF THE FIRST PEOPLE TO SETTLE HERE.
AHH, VIKINGS!
OH NO, HONEY. WE SETTLED HERE LONG AFTER THE VIKINGS WERE GONE.
THOSE STONES YOU SEE OUT THERE. THAT'S ALL THAT WAS LEFT WHEN MY FAMILY BUILT THIS MANOR HOUSE. WE DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB THEM, AND WITHIN DECADES, THE STONES BECAME HISTORICAL PROPERTY, ANYWAY. THE VILLAGE BOUGHT THEM FROM OUR FAMILY.
OH, IN WHAT YEAR? 1922.
MOST INTERESTING. THANK YOU.
THE BRITISH MUSEUM LIBRARY ARCHIVES ONLINE WELCOMES YOU TO YOUR ACCOUNT, LARA CROFT. YOU MAY ACCESS ALL OUR INFORMATION AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PATRON LEVEL.
WE'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR RECENT DONATION OF--
CLICK!
OH, DO HUSH. YOU'RE MAKING ME BLUSH.
THE NORDIC RUNES ON THAT STONE APPEAR TO SPELL: A KILL LIES HERE FOR ETERNITY.
BUT WHY DID THE STUDENT APPEAR TO FIND A BRAND NEW RUNE IN A SENTENCE THAT'S BEEN PROPERLY DECODED USING THE OLD LETTERS?
HMMM... OKAY, LET'S TRY THIS...WHAT IF IT WASN'T PROPERLY DECODED? A KILL LIES HERE...
A KILL? SACRIFICE? WAR? DOESN'T TRACK, AND IT'S SYNTACTICALLY AWKWARD. PERHAPS... HMM...

PERHAPS YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY NORDIC.
THE BEST REASON TO ADD A NEW LETTER, OR INTRODUCE A NEW PHONETIC SOUND IS WHEN YOU'VE RUN INTO A NEW PEOPLE WITH A NEW LANGUAGE. BUT WHAT PEOPLE AND WHOSE LANGUAGE?
THE ROMAN LEGIONS WERE THIS FAR NORTH, ONCE.
A KILL RESTS HERE FOR ETERNITY. THE SYNTAX WORKS AS LONG AS YOU LEAVE OUT THAT INTERESTING LITTLE DENOTATION ACROSS THE RUNE.
BUT IF YOU ADD THAT HATCHMARK YOU GET:
AQUIL RESTS HERE FOR ETERNITY! AQUIL, THE LOST IDOL OF THE ROMAN LEGIONS! I WAS RIGHT! I —
— I THINK I JUST RANG THE DOOR BELL OF ELYSIUM.
OR MAYBE THE DINNER BELL!
THERE'S ONLY ONE PROBLEM WITH BEING RIGHT. YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE IT'S GOING TO TAKE YOU!


I SEE THEY'VE...
PROVIDED...
A WELCOMING COMMITTEE!

BLATTA
BLATTA
BLATTA
BLATTA!!
THANKS, IT'S GOOD TO BE HERE.


WHEW.
YOU'VE GOT A NASTY SEWER INFESTATION IN KOLVIK. YOU REALLY OUGHT TO CALL AN EXTERMINATOR ---
OH, NO.
HELL OF A WAY TO END YOUR FIELD WORK, KID.
WELL, INVOKING AQUIL GOT US BOTH INTO THIS...I SUSPECT ONLY AQUIL IS GOING TO GET ME OUT AGAIN.
COME FORTH!!
WHO SAID THAT?
"COME FORTH!" THEY NEVER SAY "OH, DO COME IN, HAVE SOME TEA," IT'S NEVER, "WELL, I SEE WE'RE A BIT CHILLY, COME ALONG IN AND WARM UP, LUV..."
DAMNED UNFRIENDLY, IF YOU ASK ---


-- ME. OH, MY...WHO...WHAT ARE YOU?
I AM ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE PROUD NORDIC PEOPLE WHO WERE CONQUERED HERE. WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE, INTRUDER?
I'M HERE FOR THE GOLDEN AQUIL, THE LAST MISSING IDOL OF THE ROMAN LEGIONS.
THAT WOULD BE THE BRIGHT, GLOWY THINGY RIGHT BEHIND YOU --
YOU WILL OBTAIN IT ONLY IF YOU ARE WORTHY OF IT.
HOW WILL I KNOW IF I'M WORTHY OF IT?
AS THE ROMANS WHO ENSLAVED US ONCE TOLD US, "YOU MUST FIGHT FOR OUR AMUSEMENT."

THIS COULD PUT A DAMPER ON OUR RELATIONSHIP, BUT I DON'T THINK YOU'LL FIND ME VERY AMUSING!

YOU KNOW THIS: THERE IS ONE MAN IN THIS ARENA WHOM YOU MUST NOT KILL. IF YOU KILL HIM, YOU DESTROY THE AQUIL. BE PREPARED.

BLATTA BLATTA!!

BLATTA BLATTA!!

I WROTE THE HANDBOOK ON BEING PREPARED.

EXCEPT FOR THE PART ON RUNNING OUT OF AMMO -- THAT'S IN THE SECOND EDITION!

GOTTA -- FIND A SPACE TO RELOAD!

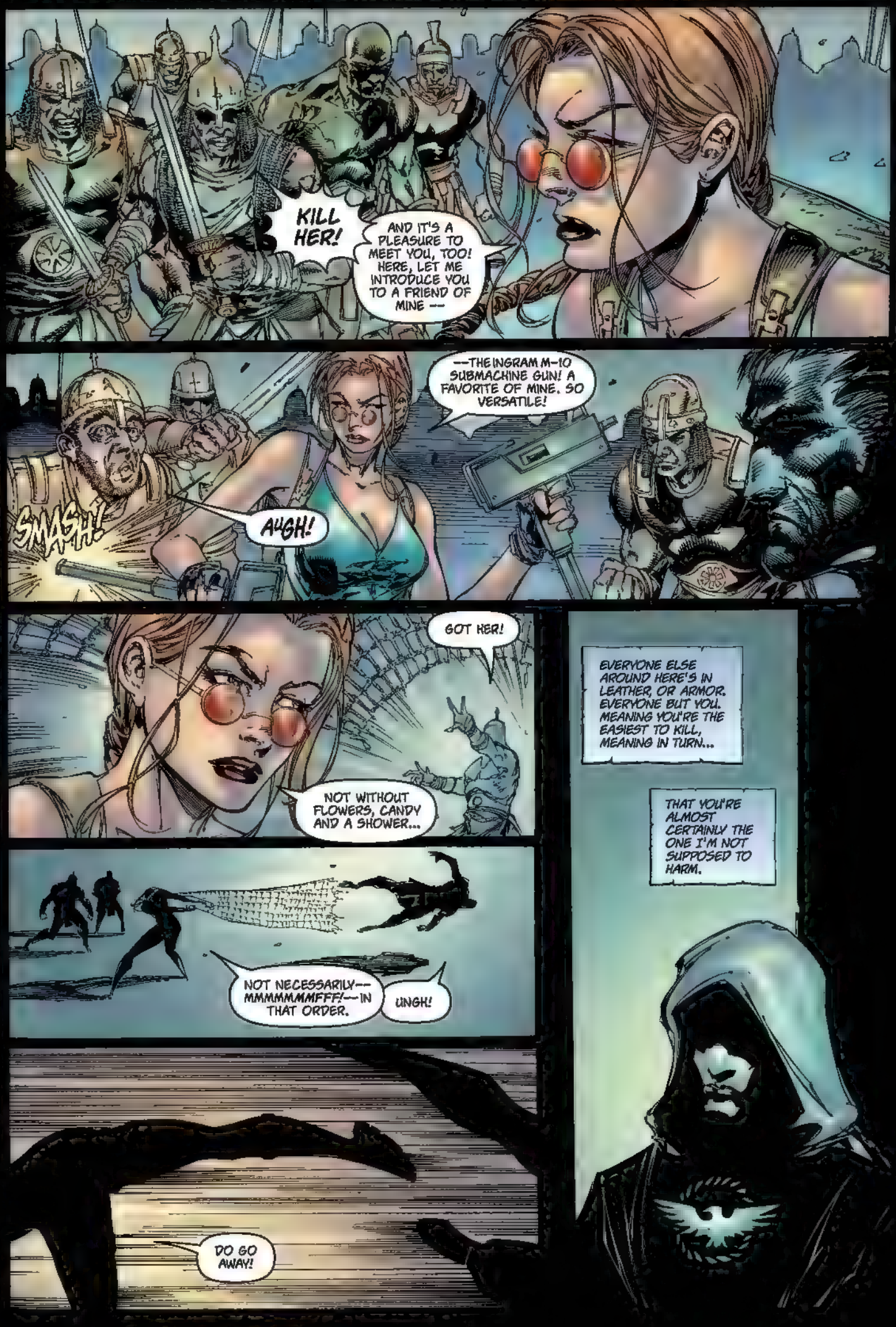
KA-CHOK KA-CHOK

SPROING!

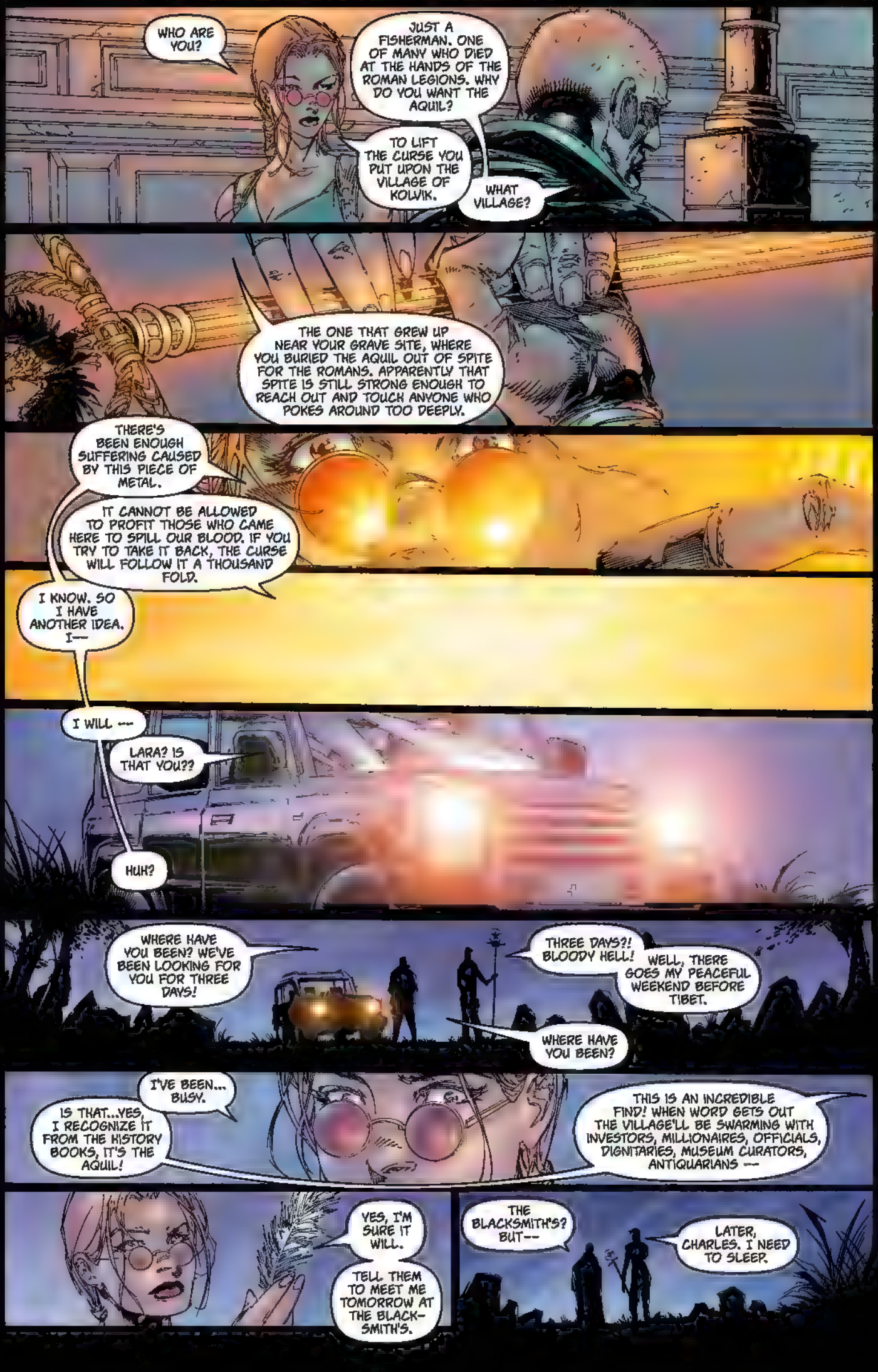
BLATTA BLATTA

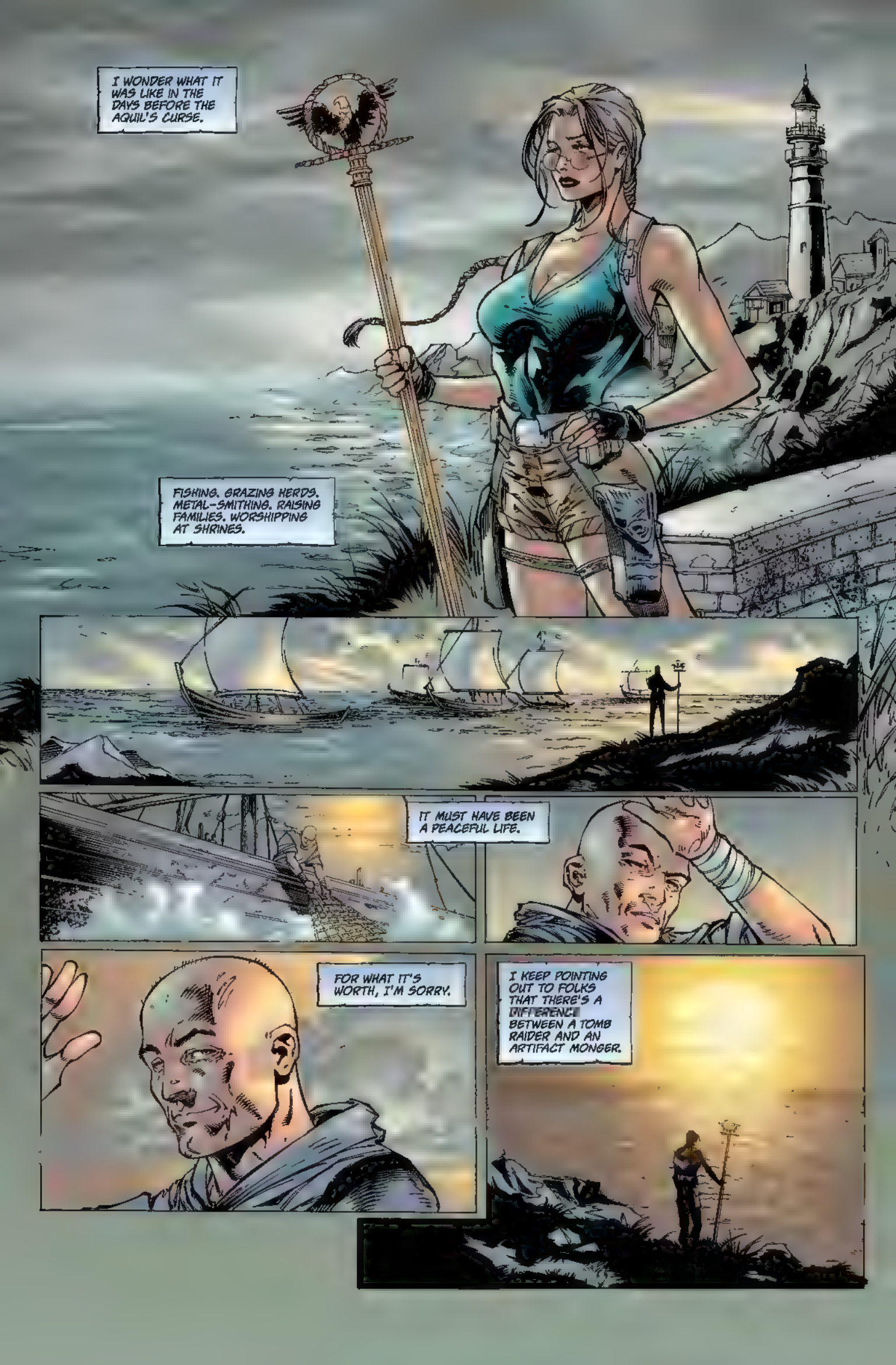
BLATTA BLATTA!!

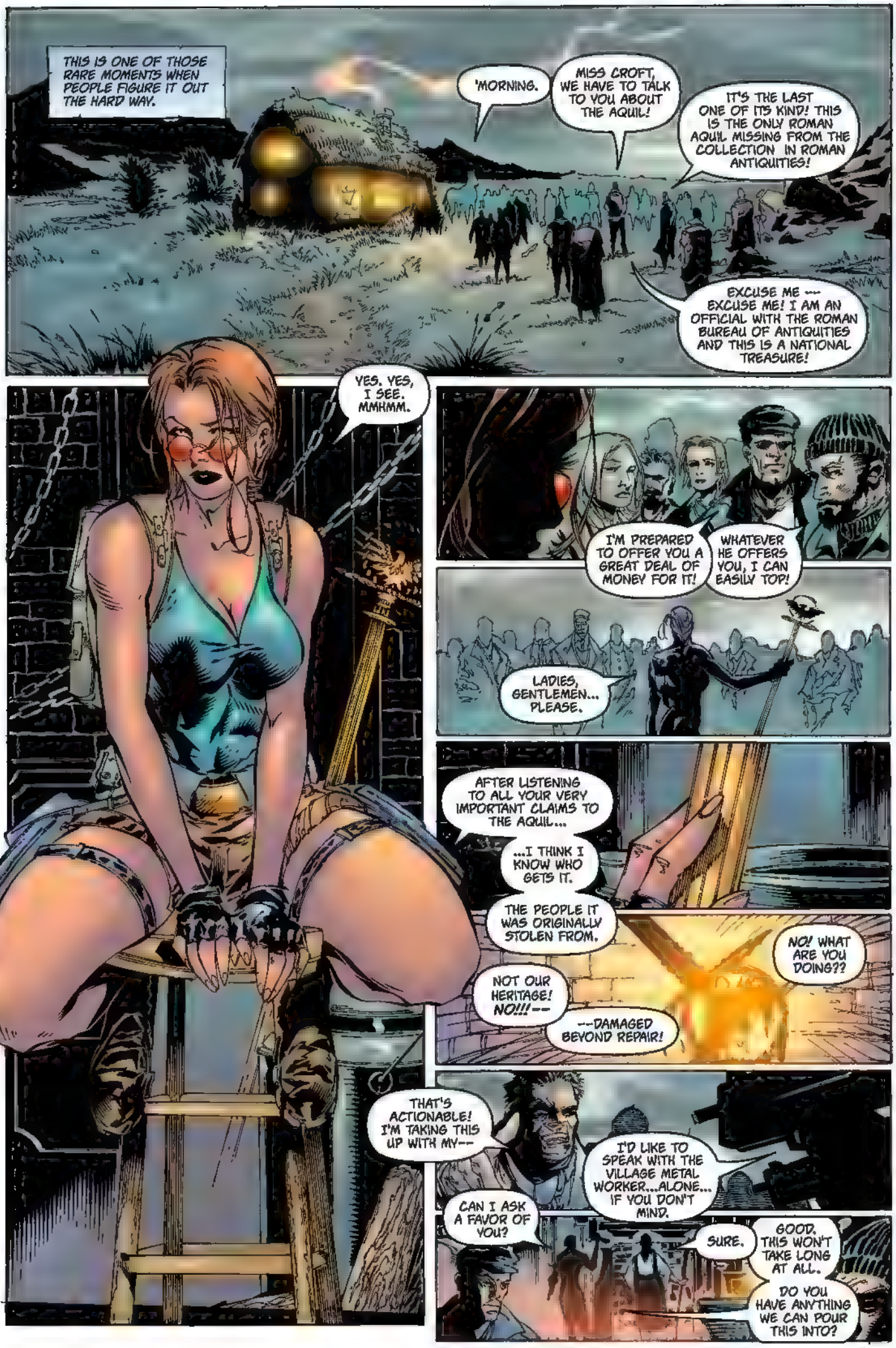
OOF! CAUGHT ME CHEATING OUT OF BOUNDS, DID YOU?
RRRRRRUUUUNNNBLE!
LOOOUUUURRRR!
OOF!
OH! GIVE A GIRL A BREAK!
GOOD KITTY. NICE BOY.
I KNOW WHERE YOU CAN'T REACH ME!
NOW... STAY!
STAAAAAAAY!!!
NOT ROLL OVER!
BAD KITTY!
STAY!
KILL THE INTRUDER!

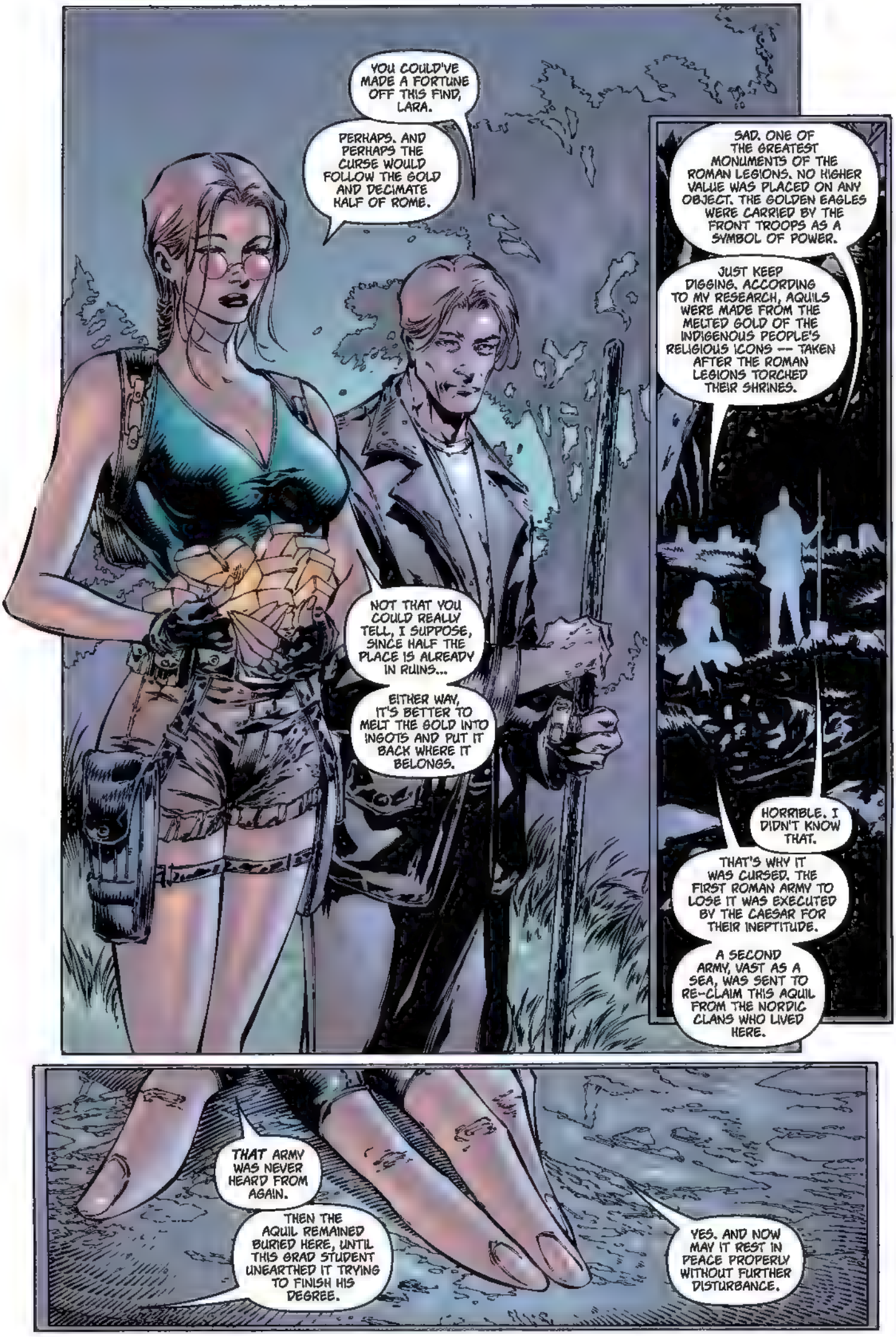

KILL HER!
AND IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, TOO! HERE, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO A FRIEND OF MINE --
--THE INGRAM M-10 SUBMACHINE GUN! A FAVORITE OF MINE. SO VERSATILE!
SMASH!
AUGH!
GOT HER!
NOT WITHOUT FLOWERS, CANDY AND A SHOWER...
EVERYONE ELSE AROUND HERE'S IN LEATHER, OR ARMOR. EVERYONE BUT YOU. MEANING YOU'RE THE EASIEST TO KILL, MEANING IN TURN...
THAT YOU'RE ALMOST CERTAINLY THE ONE I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO HARM.
NOT NECESSARILY-- MMMMMMMFFF!-- IN THAT ORDER.
UNGH!
DO GO AWAY!

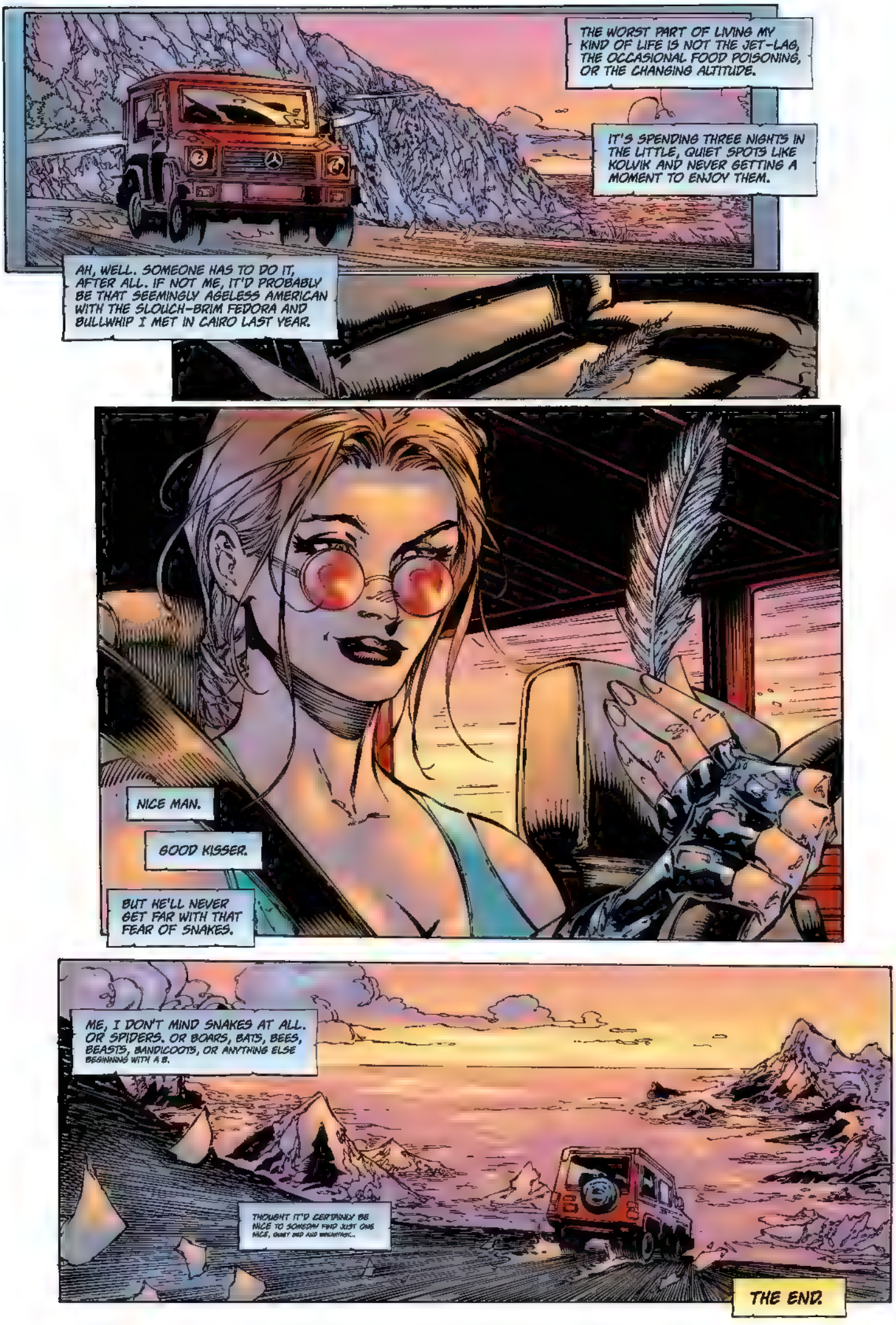
NOW, THAT'S HARDLY FAIR! I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO HURT HIM!
BUT WE NEVER SAID YOU COULDN'T FIGHT WITH HIM. HOW WILL YOU MANAGE?
YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW WELL I GET BY DODGING THE RULES. NOW NEITHER OF US CAN HURT THE OTHER.
AND YOU WERE HURT, WEREN'T YOU? BY THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE? WHO DID NOT SHOW YOU MERCY. THAT'S WHAT ALL THIS IS ABOUT, ISN'T IT?
YES. YES, IT IS.
SHE WINS THE MATCH.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNEEL BEFORE ANYONE. EVER AGAIN.


WHO ARE YOU?
JUST A FISHERMAN. ONE OF MANY WHO DIED AT THE HANDS OF THE ROMAN LEGIONS. WHY DO YOU WANT THE AQUIL?
TO LIFT THE CURSE YOU PUT UPON THE VILLAGE OF KOLVIK.
WHAT VILLAGE?
THE ONE THAT GREW UP NEAR YOUR GRAVE SITE, WHERE YOU BURIED THE AQUIL OUT OF SPITE FOR THE ROMANS. APPARENTLY THAT SPITE IS STILL STRONG ENOUGH TO REACH OUT AND TOUCH ANYONE WHO POKES AROUND TOO DEEPLY.
THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH SUFFERING CAUSED BY THIS PIECE OF METAL.
IT CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO PROFIT THOSE WHO CAME HERE TO SPILL OUR BLOOD. IF YOU TRY TO TAKE IT BACK, THE CURSE WILL FOLLOW IT A THOUSAND FOLD.
I KNOW. SO I HAVE ANOTHER IDEA. I—
I WILL —
LARA? IS THAT YOU??
HUH?
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU FOR THREE DAYS!
THREE DAYS?! BLOODY HELL!
WELL, THERE GOES MY PEACEFUL WEEKEND BEFORE TIBET.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
I'VE BEEN... BUSY.
IS THAT...YES, I RECOGNIZE IT FROM THE HISTORY BOOKS, IT'S THE AQUIL!
THIS IS AN INCREDIBLE FIND! WHEN WORD GETS OUT THE VILLAGE'LL BE SWARMING WITH INVESTORS, MILLIONAIRES, OFFICIALS, DIGNITARIES, MUSEUM CURATORS, ANTIQUARIANS —
YES, I'M SURE IT WILL.
TELL THEM TO MEET ME TOMORROW AT THE BLACK-SMITH'S.
THE BLACKSMITH'S? BUT—
LATER, CHARLES. I NEED TO SLEEP.

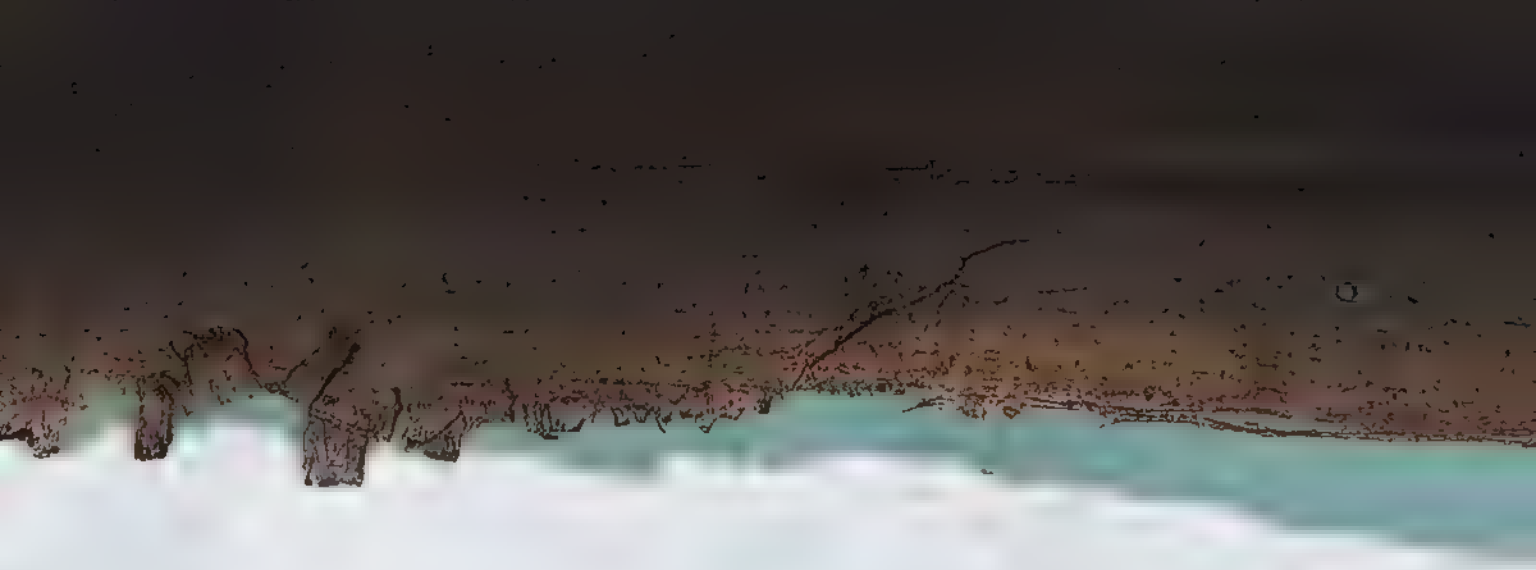

I WONDER WHAT IT WAS LIKE IN THE DAYS BEFORE THE AQUIL'S CURSE.
FISHING. GRAZING HERDS. METAL-SMITHING. RAISING FAMILIES. WORSHIPPING AT SHRINES.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN A PEACEFUL LIFE.
FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I'M SORRY.
I KEEP POINTING OUT TO FOLKS THAT THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TOMB RAIDER AND AN ARTIFACT MONGER.


THIS IS ONE OF THOSE RARE MOMENTS WHEN PEOPLE FIGURE IT OUT THE HARD WAY.
'MORNING.
MISS CROFT, WE HAVE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE AQUIL!
IT'S THE LAST ONE OF ITS KIND! THIS IS THE ONLY ROMAN AQUIL MISSING FROM THE COLLECTION IN ROMAN ANTIQUITIES!
EXCUSE ME --- EXCUSE ME! I AM AN OFFICIAL WITH THE ROMAN BUREAU OF ANTIQUITIES AND THIS IS A NATIONAL TREASURE!
YES. YES, I SEE. MMHMM.
I'M PREPARED TO OFFER YOU A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY FOR IT!
WHATEVER HE OFFERS YOU, I CAN EASILY TOP!
LADIES, GENTLEMEN... PLEASE.
AFTER LISTENING TO ALL YOUR VERY IMPORTANT CLAIMS TO THE AQUIL...
...I THINK I KNOW WHO GETS IT.
THE PEOPLE IT WAS ORIGINALLY STOLEN FROM.
NO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING??
NOT OUR HERITAGE! NO!!!--
--DAMAGED BEYOND REPAIR!
THAT'S ACTIONABLE! I'M TAKING THIS UP WITH MY--
I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH THE VILLAGE METAL WORKER...ALONE... IF YOU DON'T MIND.
CAN I ASK A FAVOR OF YOU?
SURE.
GOOD. THIS WON'T TAKE LONG AT ALL.
DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING WE CAN POUR THIS INTO?


YOU COULD'VE MADE A FORTUNE OFF THIS FIND, LARA.
PERHAPS. AND PERHAPS THE CURSE WOULD FOLLOW THE GOLD AND DECIMATE HALF OF ROME.
NOT THAT YOU COULD REALLY TELL, I SUPPOSE, SINCE HALF THE PLACE IS ALREADY IN RUINS...
EITHER WAY, IT'S BETTER TO MELT THE GOLD INTO INGOTS AND PUT IT BACK WHERE IT BELONGS.
SAD. ONE OF THE GREATEST MONUMENTS OF THE ROMAN LEGIONS. NO HIGHER VALUE WAS PLACED ON ANY OBJECT. THE GOLDEN EAGLES WERE CARRIED BY THE FRONT TROOPS AS A SYMBOL OF POWER.
JUST KEEP DIGGING. ACCORDING TO MY RESEARCH, AQUILS WERE MADE FROM THE MELTED GOLD OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S RELIGIOUS ICONS -- TAKEN AFTER THE ROMAN LEGIONS TORCHED THEIR SHRINES.
HORRIBLE. I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.
THAT'S WHY IT WAS CURSED. THE FIRST ROMAN ARMY TO LOSE IT WAS EXECUTED BY THE CAESAR FOR THEIR INEPTITUDE.
A SECOND ARMY, VAST AS A SEA, WAS SENT TO RE-CLAIM THIS AQUIL FROM THE NORDIC CLANS WHO LIVED HERE.
THAT ARMY WAS NEVER HEARD FROM AGAIN.
THEN THE AQUIL REMAINED BURIED HERE, UNTIL THIS GRAD STUDENT UNEARTHED IT TRYING TO FINISH HIS DEGREE.
YES. AND NOW MAY IT REST IN PEACE PROPERLY WITHOUT FURTHER DISTURBANCE.


THE WORST PART OF LIVING MY KIND OF LIFE IS NOT THE JET-LAG, THE OCCASIONAL FOOD POISONING, OR THE CHANGING ALTITUDE.
IT'S SPENDING THREE NIGHTS IN THE LITTLE, QUIET SPOTS LIKE KOLVIK AND NEVER GETTING A MOMENT TO ENJOY THEM.
AH, WELL. SOMEONE HAS TO DO IT, AFTER ALL. IF NOT ME, IT'D PROBABLY BE THAT SEEMINGLY AGELESS AMERICAN WITH THE SLOUCH-BRIM FEDORA AND BULLWHIP I MET IN CAIRO LAST YEAR.
NICE MAN.
GOOD KISSER.
BUT HE'LL NEVER GET FAR WITH THAT FEAR OF SNAKES.
ME, I DON'T MIND SNAKES AT ALL. OR SPIDERS. OR BOARS, BATS, BEES, BEASTS, BANDICOOTS, OR ANYTHING ELSE BEGINNING WITH A B.
THOUGHT IT'D CERTAINLY BE NICE TO SOMEDAY FIND JUST ONE NICE, QUIET BED AND BREAKFAST...
THE END.

TOMB RAIDER #½



SCRIPT
DAN JURGENS

PENCILS
MICHAEL LOPEZ AND ERIC BASALDUA

INKS
JOHN LIVESAY, MARLO ALQUIZA,
AND ERIC BASALDUA

COLORS
JONATHAN D. SMITH

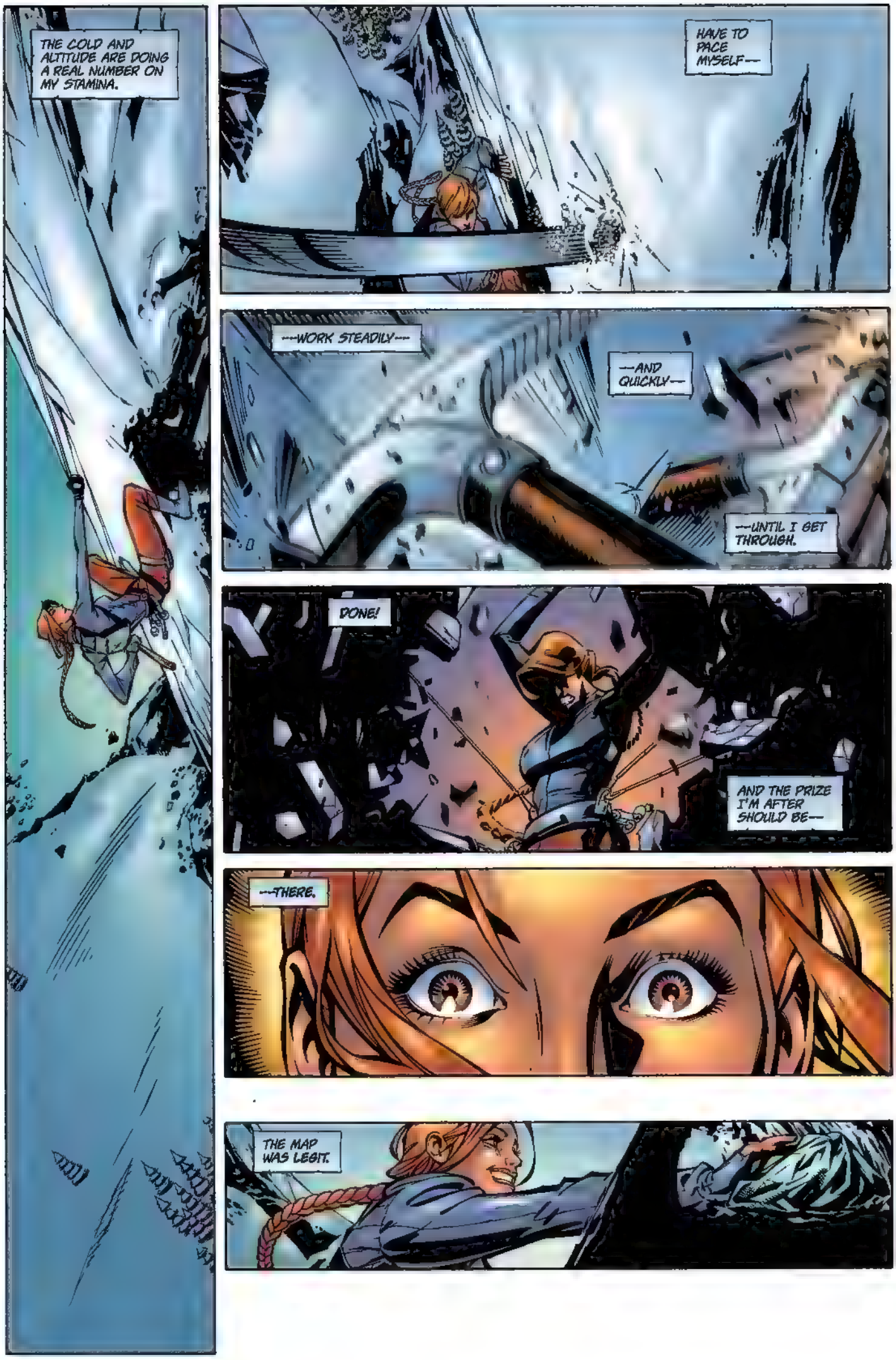
LETTERS
DREAMER DESIGN, ROBIN SPEHAR,
AND DENNIS HEISLER

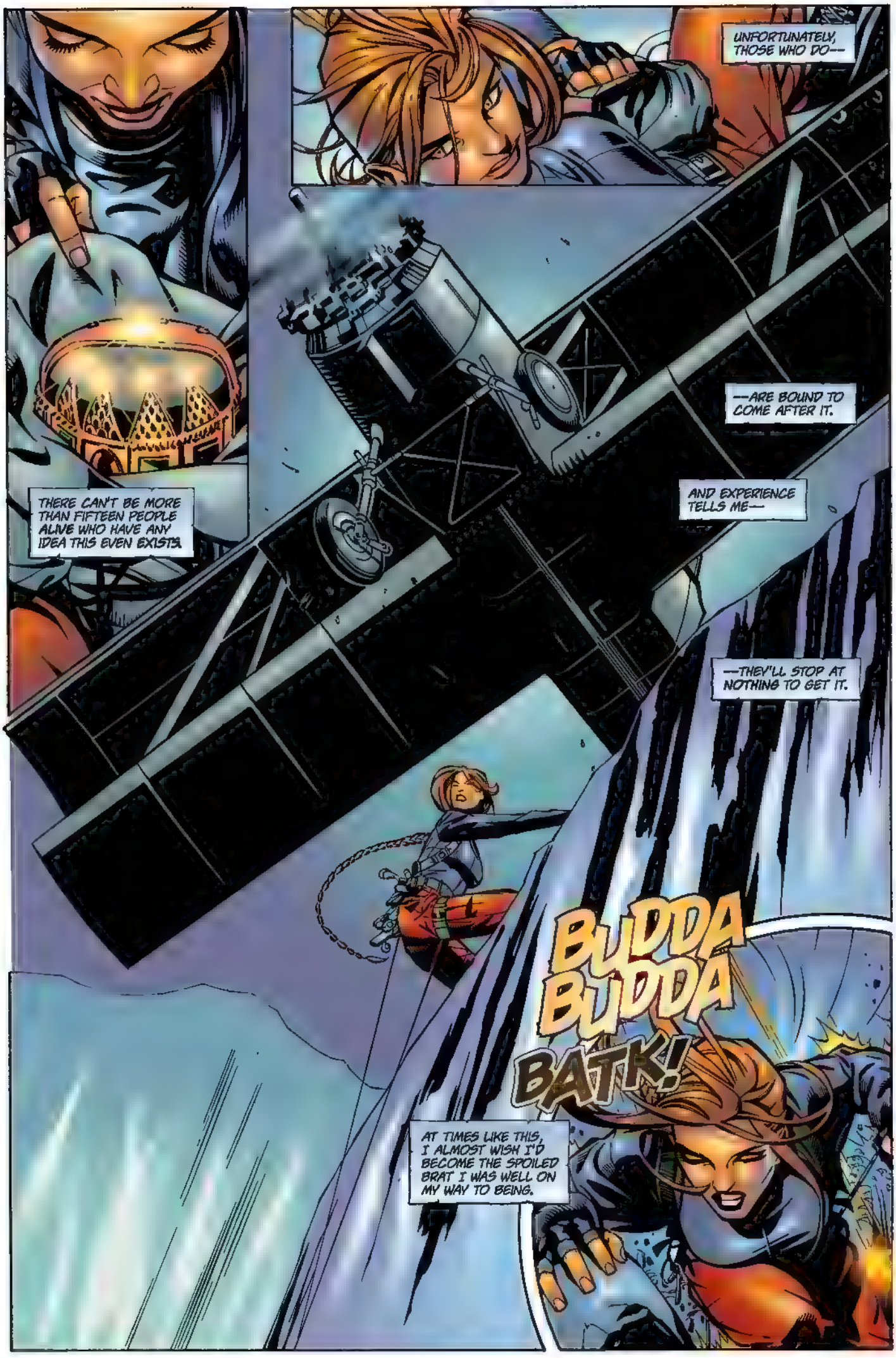
COVER PENCILS
ANDY PARK

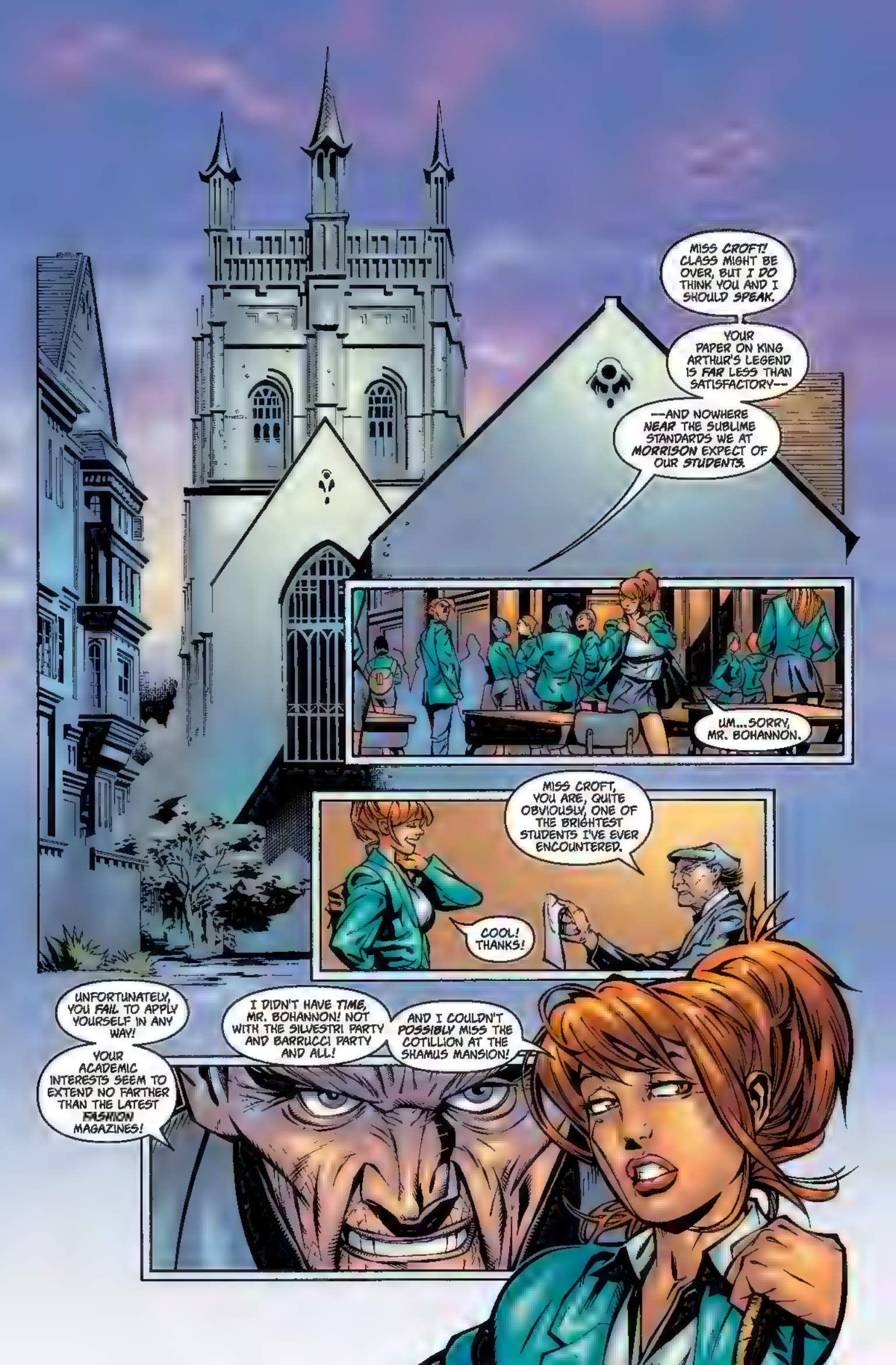
COVER INKS
JONATHAN SIBAL

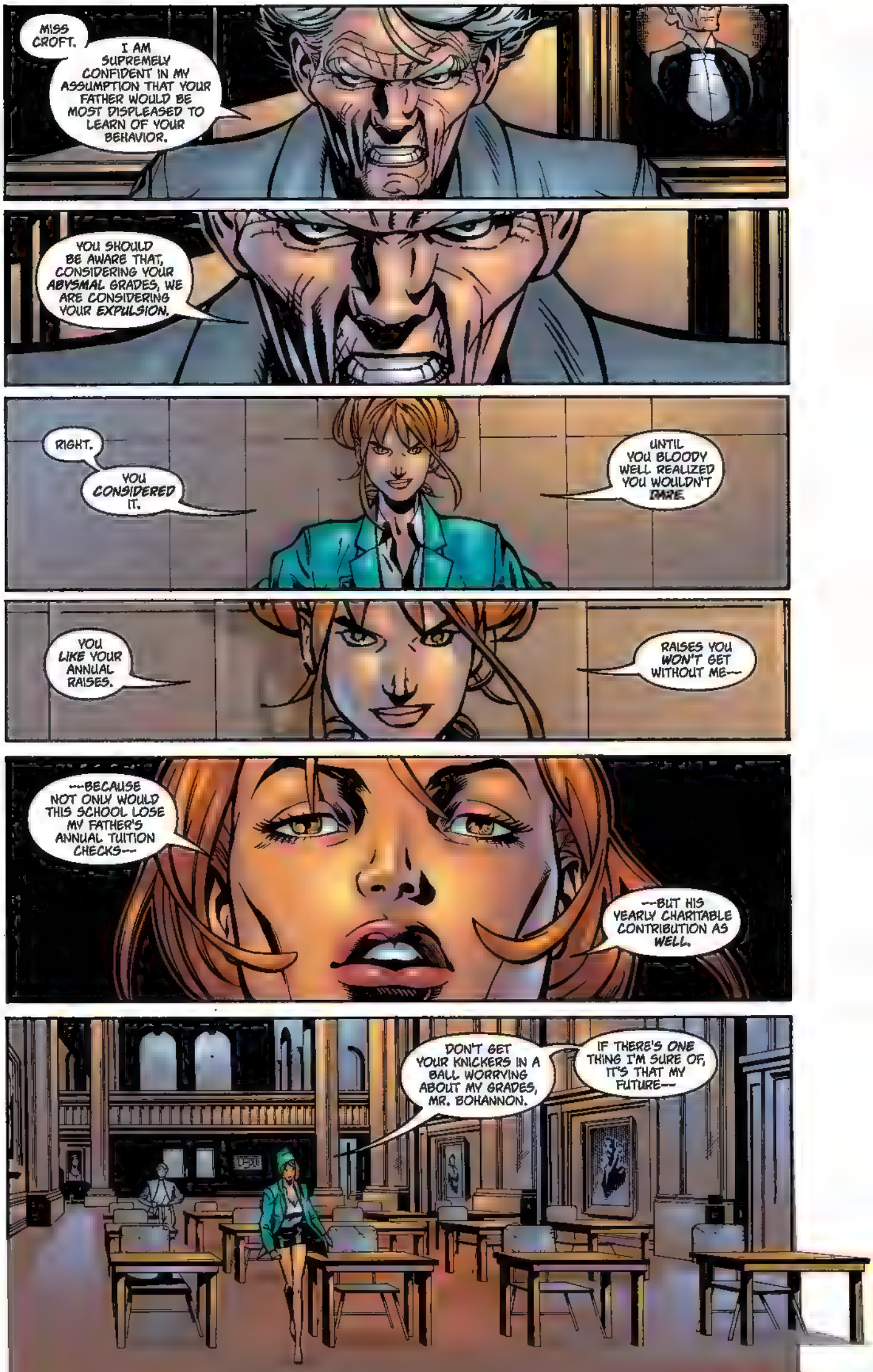
COVER COLORS
JONATHAN D. SMITH

I'M LARA CROFT. IF IT'S UNIQUE OR EXCITING, I GO AFTER IT.
NO MATTER WHERE IT IS.
NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES TO GET IT.


THE COLD AND ALTITUDE ARE DOING A REAL NUMBER ON MY STAMINA.
HAVE TO PACE MYSELF—
—WORK STEADILY—
—AND QUICKLY—
—UNTIL I GET THROUGH.
DONE!
AND THE PRIZE I'M AFTER SHOULD BE—
—THERE.
THE MAP WAS LEGIT.


THERE CAN'T BE MORE THAN FIFTEEN PEOPLE ALIVE WHO HAVE ANY IDEA THIS EVEN EXISTS.
UNFORTUNATELY, THOSE WHO DO--
--ARE BOUND TO COME AFTER IT.
AND EXPERIENCE TELLS ME--
--THEY'LL STOP AT NOTHING TO GET IT.
BUDDA BUDDA
BATK!
AT TIMES LIKE THIS, I ALMOST WISH I'D BECOME THE SPOILED BRAT I WAS WELL ON MY WAY TO BEING.

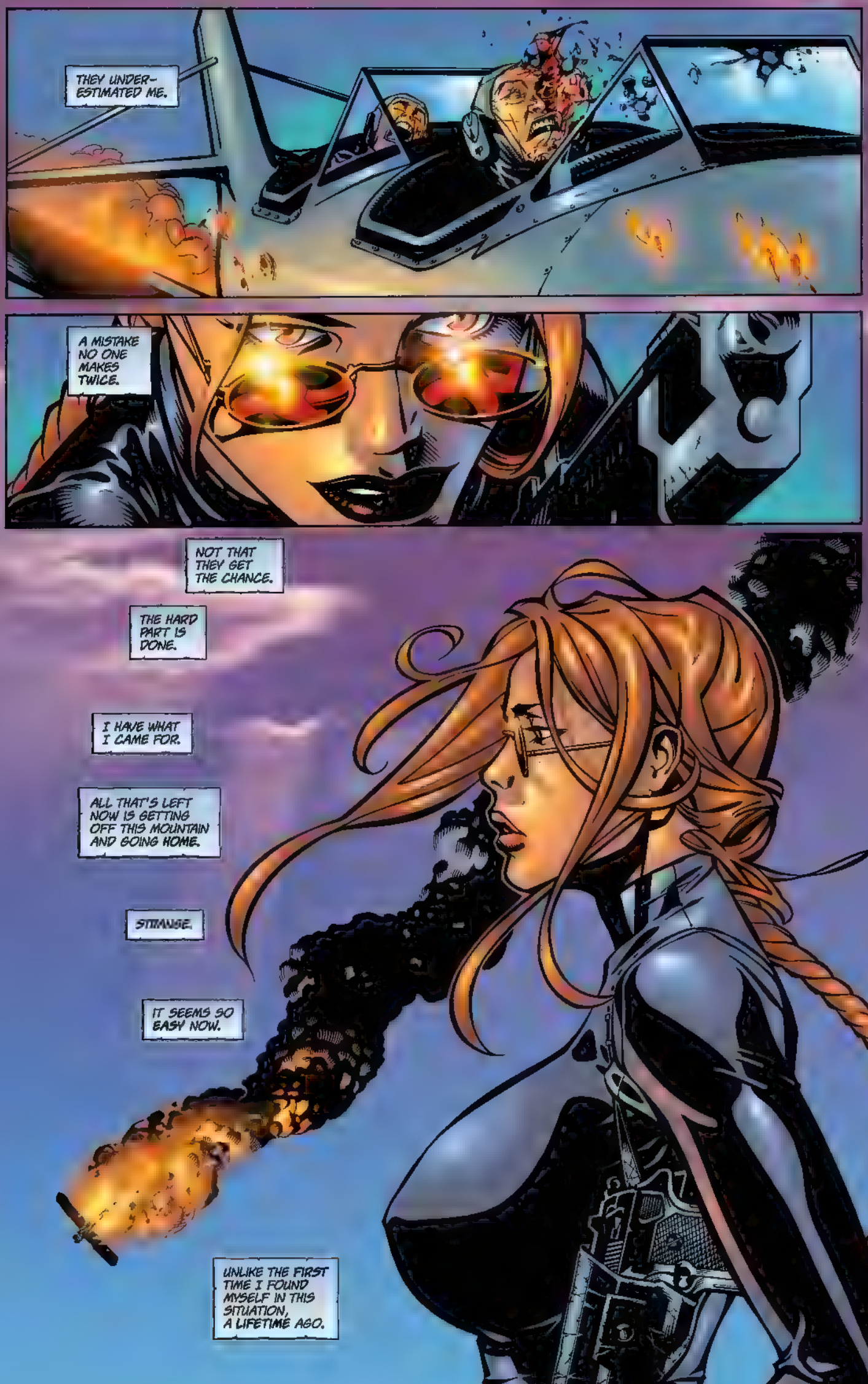

MISS CROFT! CLASS MIGHT BE OVER, BUT I DO THINK YOU AND I SHOULD SPEAK.
YOUR PAPER ON KING ARTHUR'S LEGEND IS FAR LESS THAN SATISFACTORY--
--AND NOWHERE NEAR THE SUBLIME STANDARDS WE AT MORRISON EXPECT OF OUR STUDENTS.
UM...SORRY, MR. BOHANNON.
MISS CROFT, YOU ARE, QUITE OBVIOUSLY, ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST STUDENTS I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.
COOL! THANKS!
UNFORTUNATELY, YOU FAIL TO APPLY YOURSELF IN ANY WAY!
YOUR ACADEMIC INTERESTS SEEM TO EXTEND NO FARTHER THAN THE LATEST FASHION MAGAZINES!
I DIDN'T HAVE TIME, MR. BOHANNON! NOT WITH THE SILVESTRI PARTY AND BARRUCCI PARTY AND ALL!
AND I COULDN'T POSSIBLY MISS THE COTILLION AT THE SHAMUS MANSION!

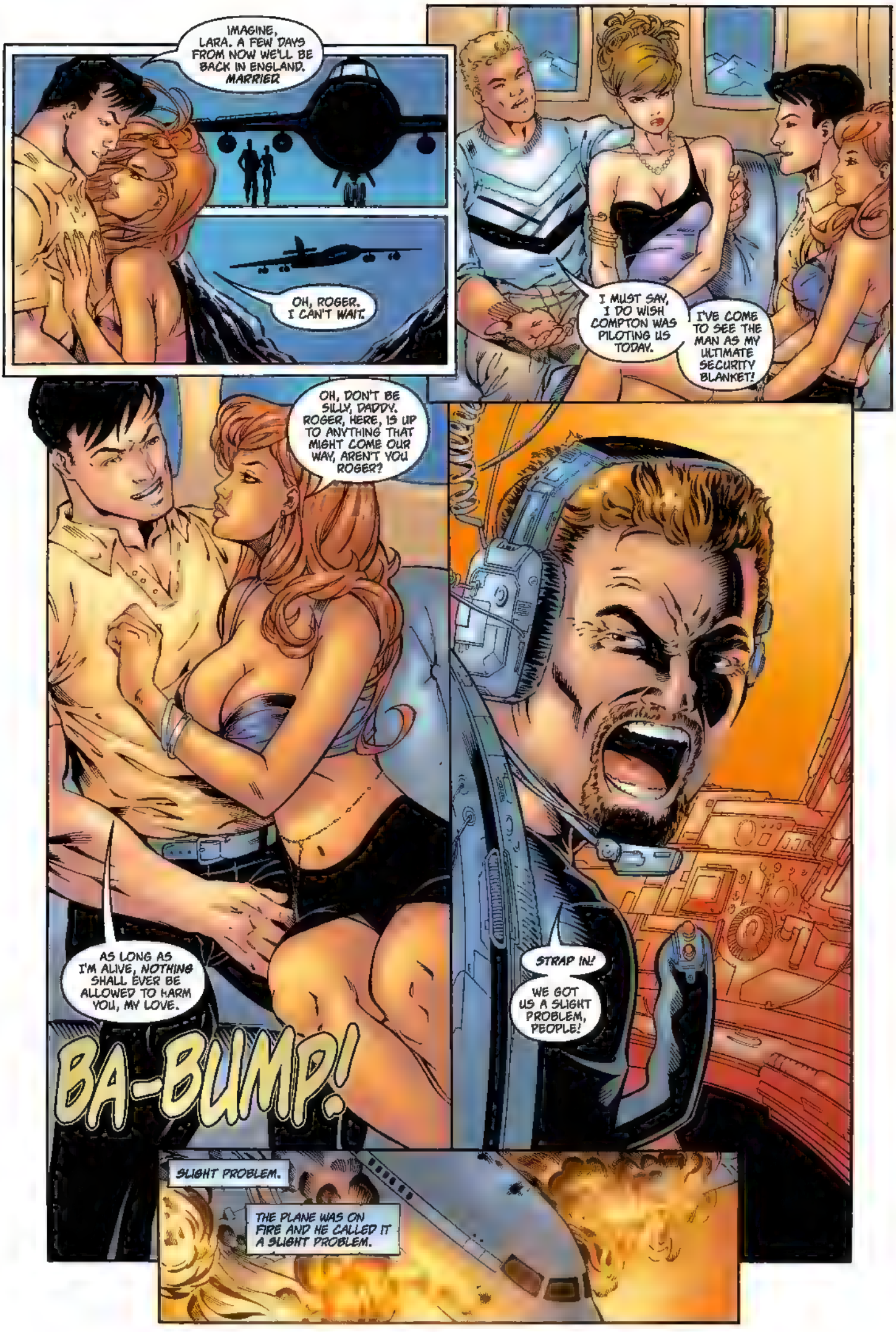

MISS CROFT.
I AM SUPREMELY CONFIDENT IN MY ASSUMPTION THAT YOUR FATHER WOULD BE MOST DISPLEASED TO LEARN OF YOUR BEHAVIOR.
YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT, CONSIDERING YOUR ABYSMAL GRADES, WE ARE CONSIDERING YOUR EXPULSION.
RIGHT.
YOU CONSIDERED IT.
UNTIL YOU BLOODY WELL REALIZED YOU WOULDN'T DARE.
YOU LIKE YOUR ANNUAL RAISES.
RAISES YOU WON'T GET WITHOUT ME—
—BECAUSE NOT ONLY WOULD THIS SCHOOL LOSE MY FATHER'S ANNUAL TUITION CHECKS—
—BUT HIS YEARLY CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION AS WELL.
DON'T GET YOUR KNICKERS IN A BALL WORRYING ABOUT MY GRADES, MR. BOHANNON.
IF THERE'S ONE THING I'M SURE OF, IT'S THAT MY FUTURE—

"---IS SET."
ONLY HAVE SECONDS TO ACT BEFORE THE RED BARON COMES IN FOR ANOTHER PASS.
BETTER MAKE THOSE SECONDS COUNT--
---BY CHANGING LOCATION.
B-TOKK!
HATE LOSING MY SAFETY HARNESS---

"—BUT I STARTED WORKING WITHOUT A NET A LONG TIME AGO."
I SAY, LORD CROFT! YOUR DAUGHTER'S A NATURAL! WORTHY OF THE OLYMPICS, PERHAPS!
THANK YOU, COMPTON. BUT I'LL NEVER ALLOW LARA TO PURSUE SUCH NEANDERTHAL ACTIVITIES.
CAN WE GO NOW, COMPTON?
HUSH, CHILD.
YOUR FATHER WOULD NEVER APPROVE OF YOU HAVING SHOOTING SKILLS, BUT AS YOUR SECURITY ADVISER—
—I CONSIDER IT A MUST.
COME.
THE DAY MIGHT COME WHEN YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

TRUER WORDS WERE NEVER SPOKEN. I'M COLD
IT'S HARD TO BREATHE---
TZING! TZING!
TZZING!
---AND SOMEONE'S TRYING TO SHOOT ME FULL OF HOLES.
IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH TO TICK SOMEONE OFF--
--NOTHING IS.
FORTUNATELY, I'M A BIG GIRL.
MORE THAN CAPABLE OF TAKING CARE OF MYSELF.
B-DAM!
B-DAM!
B-DAMM!

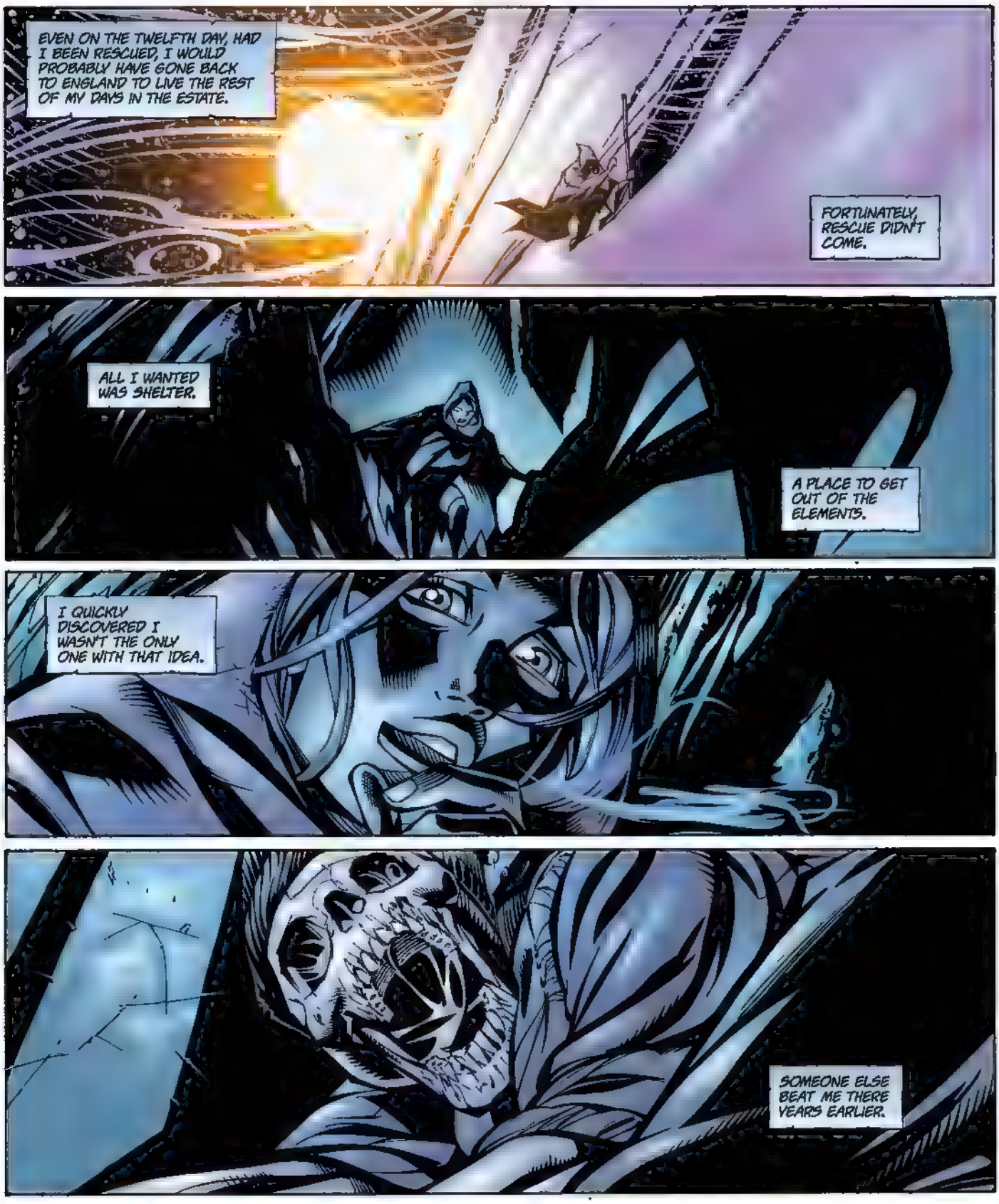

THEY UNDER-ESTIMATED ME.
A MISTAKE NO ONE MAKES TWICE.
NOT THAT THEY GET THE CHANCE.
THE HARD PART IS DONE.
I HAVE WHAT I CAME FOR.
ALL THAT'S LEFT NOW IS GETTING OFF THIS MOUNTAIN AND GOING HOME.
STRANGE.
IT SEEMS SO EASY NOW.
UNLIKE THE FIRST TIME I FOUND MYSELF IN THIS SITUATION, A LIFETIME AGO.


IMAGINE, LARA. A FEW DAYS FROM NOW WE'LL BE BACK IN ENGLAND. MARRIED.
OH, ROGER. I CAN'T WAIT.
I MUST SAY, I DO WISH COMPTON WAS PILOTING US TODAY.
I'VE COME TO SEE THE MAN AS MY ULTIMATE SECURITY BLANKET!
OH, DON'T BE SILLY, DADDY. ROGER, HERE, IS UP TO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT COME OUR WAY, AREN'T YOU ROGER?
AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE, NOTHING SHALL EVER BE ALLOWED TO HARM YOU, MY LOVE.
BA-BUMP!
STRAP IN!
WE GOT US A SLIGHT PROBLEM, PEOPLE!
SLIGHT PROBLEM.
THE PLANE WAS ON FIRE AND HE CALLED IT A SLIGHT PROBLEM.

IT WAS A LOT MORE THAN THAT.
OF COURSE, I SUPPOSE THE CRASH ITSELF WAS ONLY A SLIGHT PROBLEM--
--COMPARED WITH WHAT WAS TO COME.
THE INTENSE HEAT... THE PAIN OF HAVING BEEN TOSSED THROUGH THE CABIN.
THAT DIDN'T HURT.
NOT THE WAY THE INNER PAIN DID.
THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN MY LIFE WERE DEAD.
AND IF I DIDN'T GET BUSY--
--I WAS GOING TO JOIN THEM.

BWHOOM!
I WAS ALONE.
WITHOUT FOOD, WATER, ADEQUATE CLOTHING OR THE MEANS TO COMMUNICATE WITH RESCUERS.
I WAS IN TROUBLE.
MAJOR TROUBLE.
THE KIND THAT KILLS YOU.

I SPENT WEEKS FIGHTING...LEARNING HOW TO SURVIVE ON THE GO.
EVERY BIT OF EXPERIENCE I'D EVER HAD, FROM SCHOOL TO GYMNASTICS TO SIMPLE CAMPING TRIPS BECAME CRUCIAL.
I DID THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS CAPABLE OF.
THE LARA CROFT WHO EMERGED FROM THAT ORDEAL WAS NOT THE ONE WHO BOARDED THE PLANE.


EVEN ON THE TWELFTH DAY, HAD I BEEN RESCUED, I WOULD PROBABLY HAVE GONE BACK TO ENGLAND TO LIVE THE REST OF MY DAYS IN THE ESTATE.
FORTUNATELY, RESCUE DIDN'T COME.
ALL I WANTED WAS SHELTER.
A PLACE TO GET OUT OF THE ELEMENTS.
I QUICKLY DISCOVERED I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WITH THAT IDEA.
SOMEONE ELSE BEAT ME THERE YEARS EARLIER.

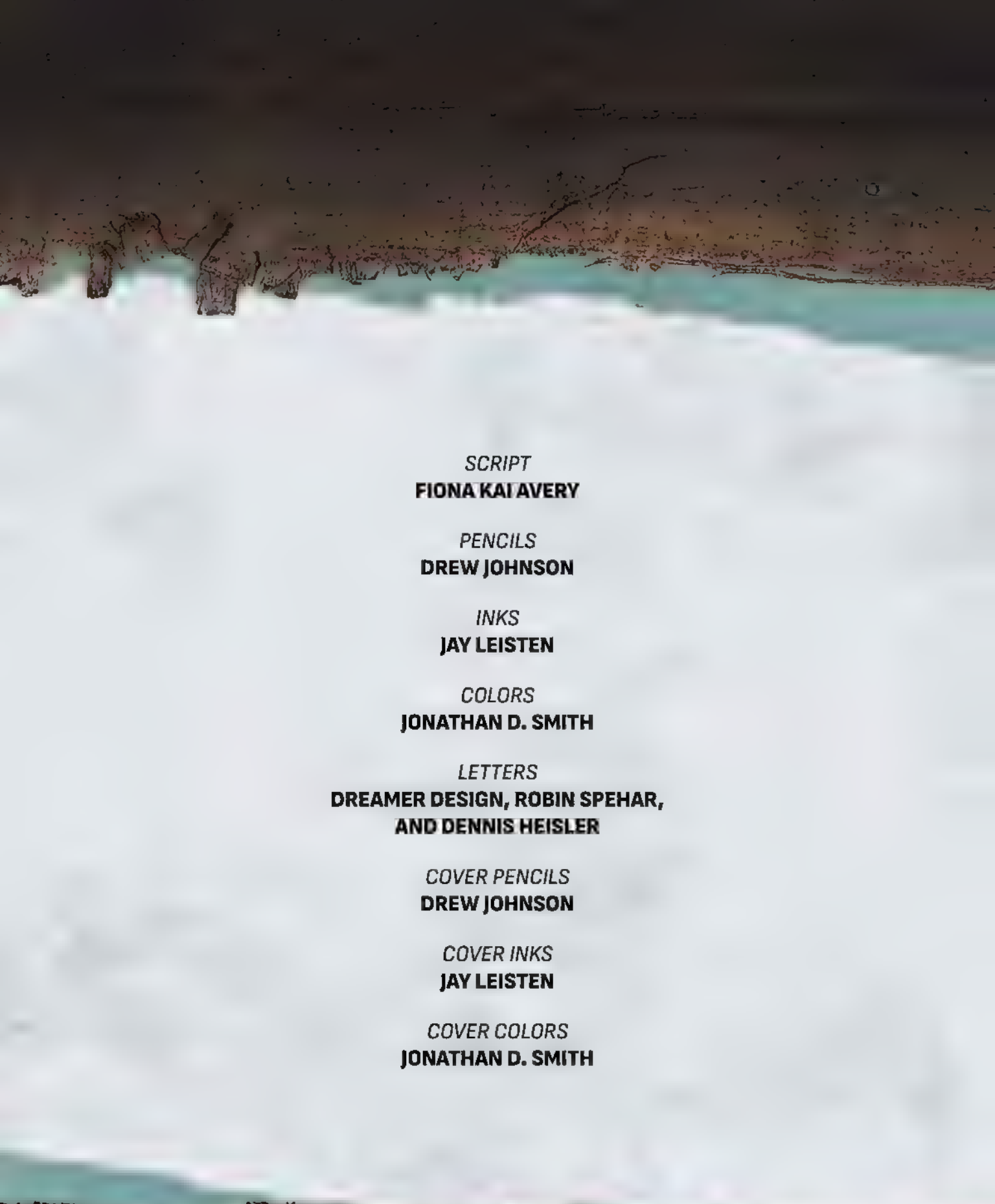
I DUG THROUGH HIS BAG HOPING FOR FOOD, A WEAPON OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT MIGHT HELP ME SURVIVE THE WORSENING STORM.

IT WAS A GOBLET.
AN INCREDIBLY OLD AND BEAUTIFUL ORNATE CHALICE.
I'LL NEVER KNOW FOR SURE, BUT TO THIS DAY I DON'T BELIEVE IT BELONGED TO HIM.
HE WAS A TREASURE HUNTER... A SEEKER OF RELICS.
HOLDING IT IN MY HANDS... KNOWING WHAT I'D SURVIVED TO ACQUIRE IT...
...WAS MAGICAL.
AS I DESCENDED THE MOUNTAIN I MADE UP MY MIND AND KNEW BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT--
--THAT I'D CHANGED FOREVER--
--AND THAT I'D BE BACK.
JUST AS I KNOW NOW THAT I'M GOING HOME--
--TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT.

Dear Mr. [illegible]

[illegible] years I have [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

drew
JAY
JD SMITH
2001



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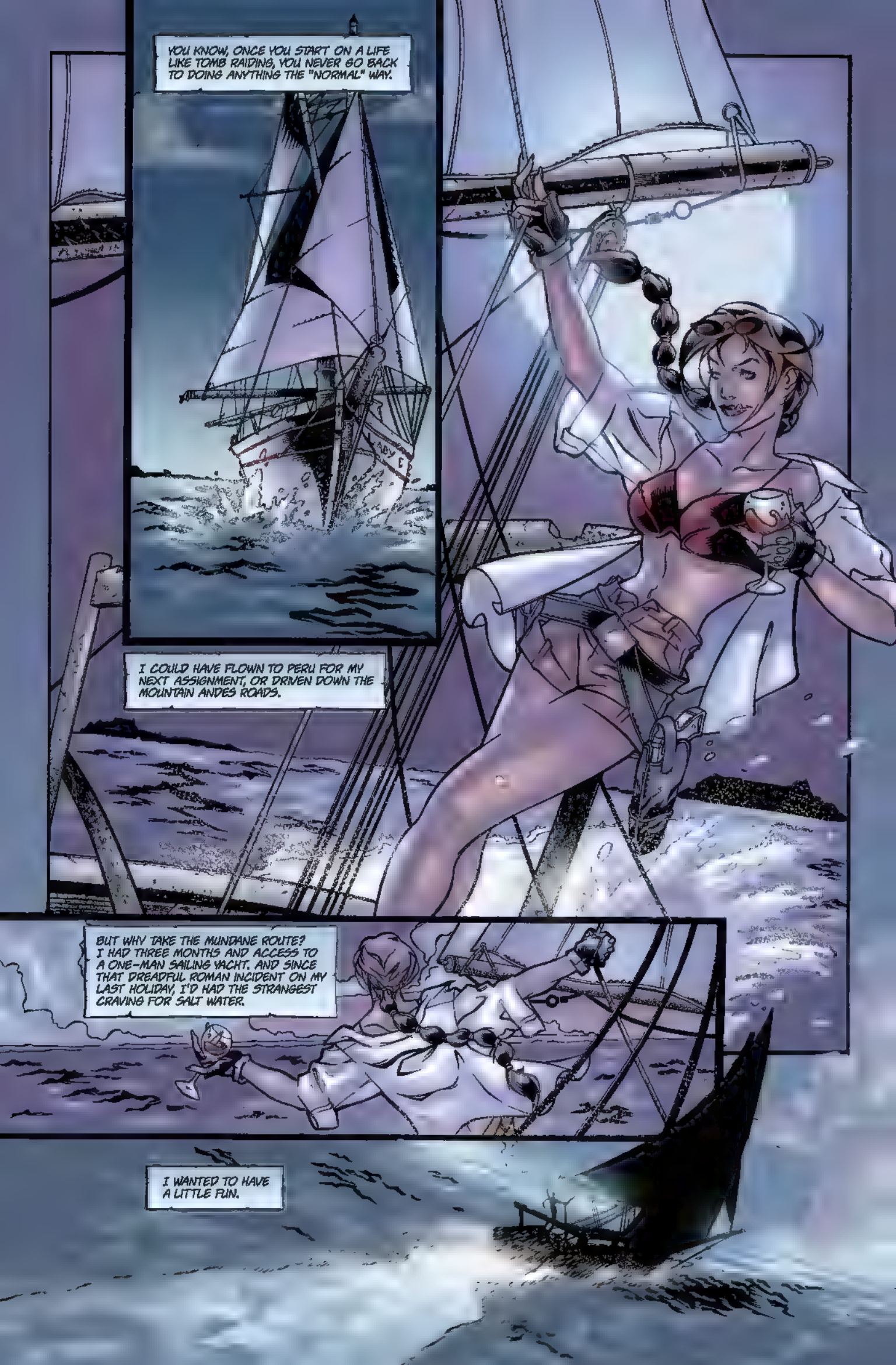
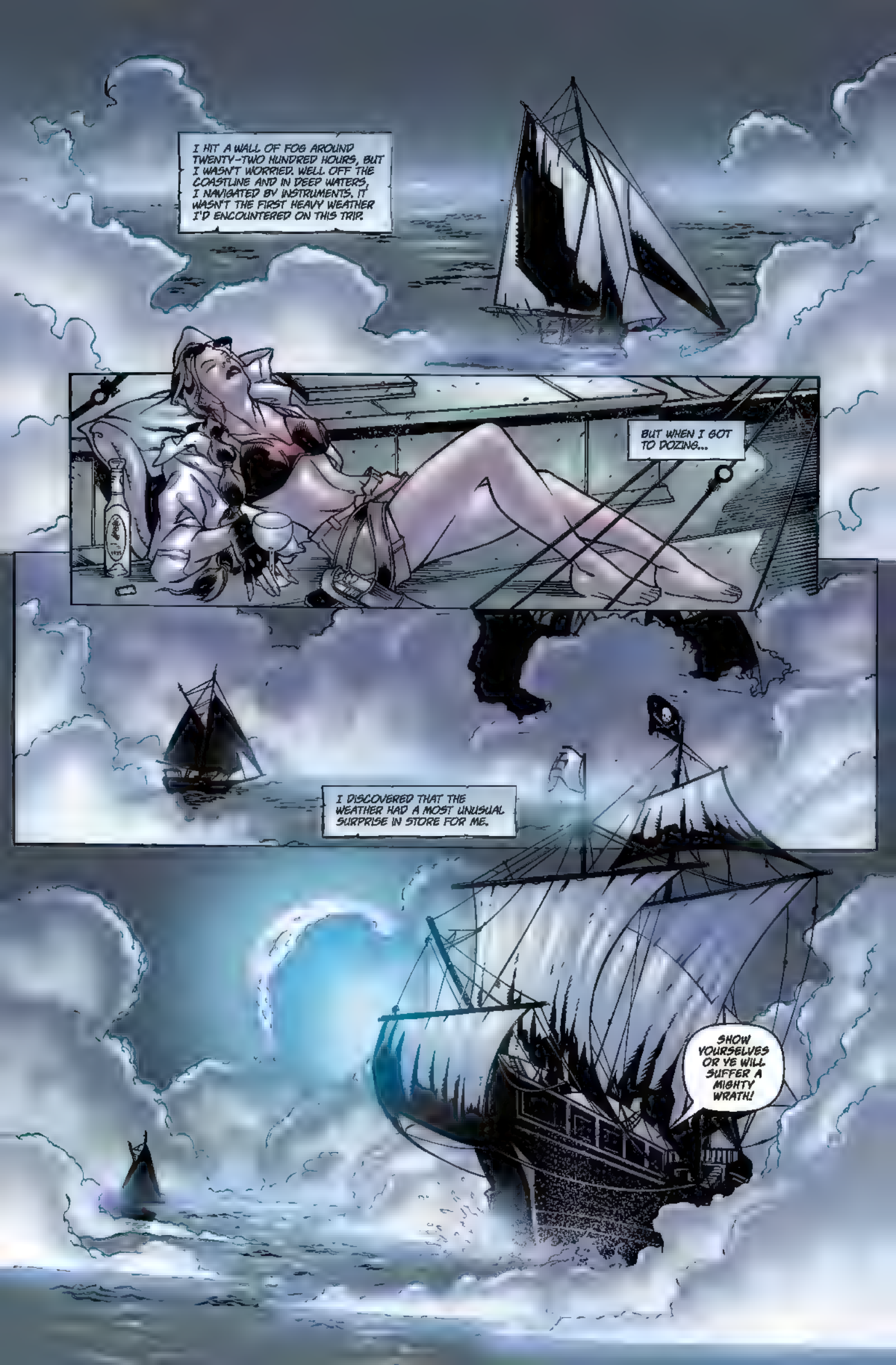
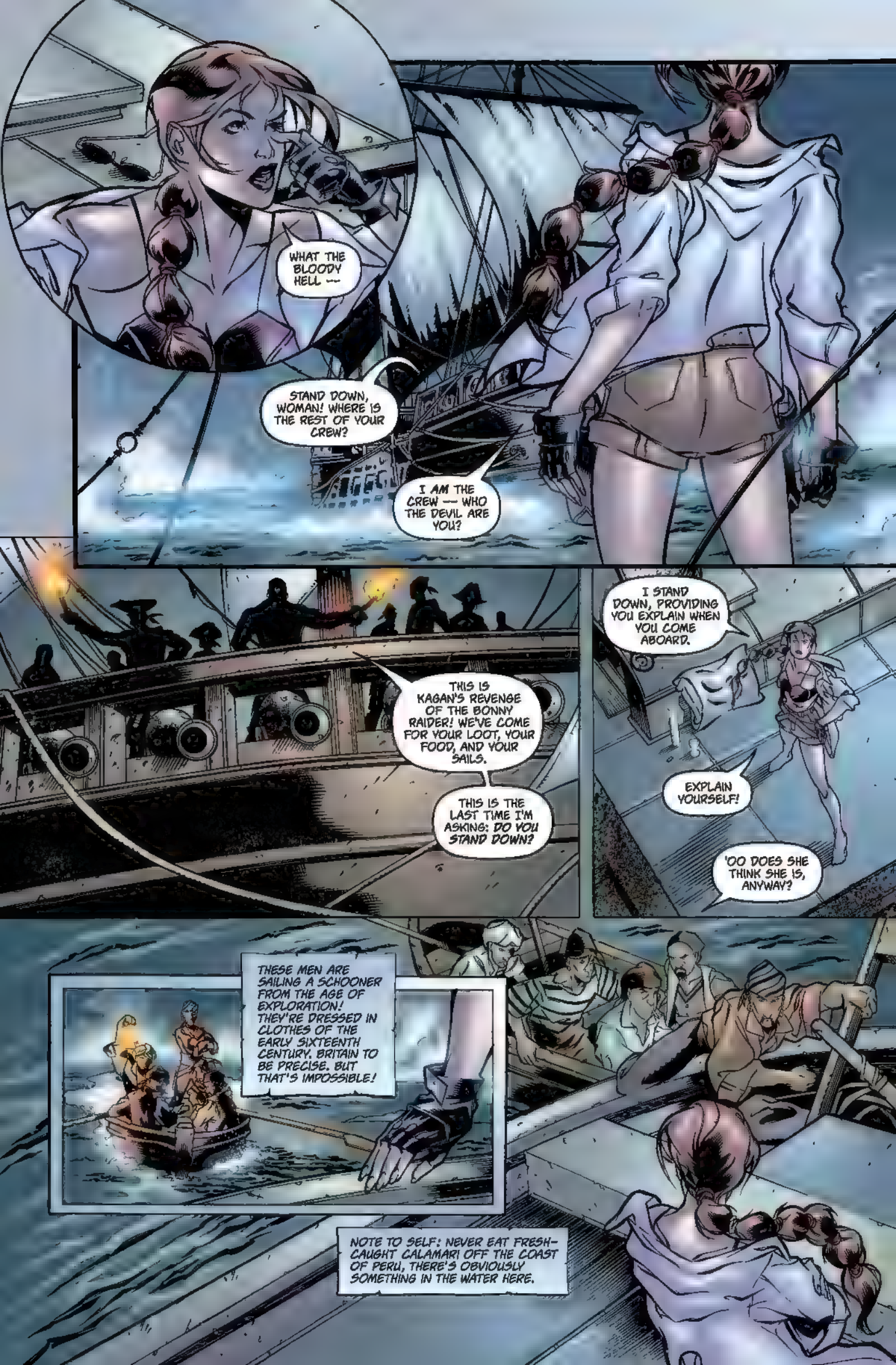

YOU KNOW, ONCE YOU START ON A LIFE LIKE TOMB RAIDING, YOU NEVER GO BACK TO DOING ANYTHING THE "NORMAL" WAY.
I COULD HAVE FLOWN TO PERU FOR MY NEXT ASSIGNMENT, OR DRIVEN DOWN THE MOUNTAIN ANDES ROADS.
BUT WHY TAKE THE MUNDANE ROUTE? I HAD THREE MONTHS AND ACCESS TO A ONE-MAN SAILING YACHT. AND SINCE THAT DREADFUL ROMAN INCIDENT ON MY LAST HOLIDAY, I'D HAD THE STRANGEST CRAVING FOR SALT WATER.
I WANTED TO HAVE A LITTLE FUN.


I HIT A WALL OF FOG AROUND TWENTY-TWO HUNDRED HOURS, BUT I WASN'T WORRIED. WELL OFF THE COASTLINE AND IN DEEP WATERS, I NAVIGATED BY INSTRUMENTS. IT WASN'T THE FIRST HEAVY WEATHER I'D ENCOUNTERED ON THIS TRIP.
BUT WHEN I GOT TO DOZING...
I DISCOVERED THAT THE WEATHER HAD A MOST UNUSUAL SURPRISE IN STORE FOR ME.
SHOW YOURSELVES OR YE WILL SUFFER A MIGHTY WRATH!

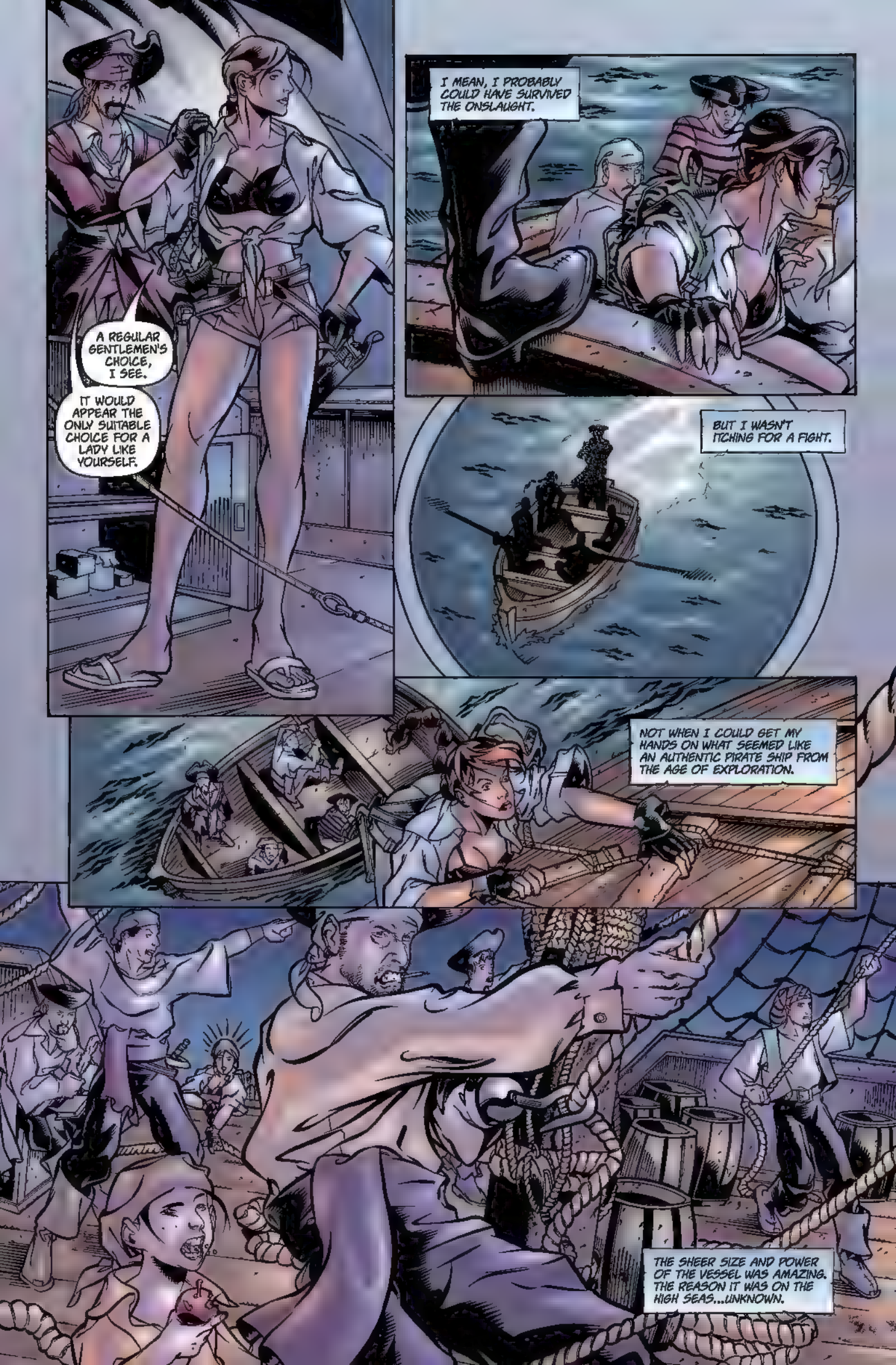

WHAT THE BLOODY HELL ---
STAND DOWN, WOMAN! WHERE IS THE REST OF YOUR CREW?
I AM THE CREW -- WHO THE DEVIL ARE YOU?
THIS IS KAGAN'S REVENGE OF THE BONNY RAIDER! WE'VE COME FOR YOUR LOOT, YOUR FOOD, AND YOUR SAILS.
THIS IS THE LAST TIME I'M ASKING: DO YOU STAND DOWN?
I STAND DOWN, PROVIDING YOU EXPLAIN WHEN YOU COME ABOARD.
EXPLAIN YOURSELF!
'OO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS, ANYWAY?
THESE MEN ARE SAILING A SCHOONER FROM THE AGE OF EXPLORATION! THEY'RE DRESSED IN CLOTHES OF THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY. BRITAIN TO BE PRECISE. BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
NOTE TO SELF: NEVER EAT FRESH-CAUGHT CALAMARI OFF THE COAST OF PERU, THERE'S OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING IN THE WATER HERE.

I NEVER SEEN THE LIKES OF THESE. SO WELL-CRAFTED! SUCH HIGH QUALITY!
WOMAN! WHAT BE THIS?
BEANS. FOR FRANKS AND BEANS.
IMPOSSIBLE TO GET TO IT!
WELCOME TO THE INVENTION OF THE CAN. OPENER.
WHERE BE YOUR TREASURE? DON'T BE HIDING IT FROM US!
THERE IS NO TREASURE ON THIS SHIP.
YOU'RE LYING!
OR PERHAPS, YOU'RE WEARING IT, SWEET ONE.
BLATTA
BLATTA
BLATTA
DEVIL GUNS!
GOOD LORD.
NOW THAT I'VE GOT YOUR ATTENTION, GENTLEMEN, I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND GRANTING ME PERMISSION TO SPEAK WITH YOUR CAPTAIN.

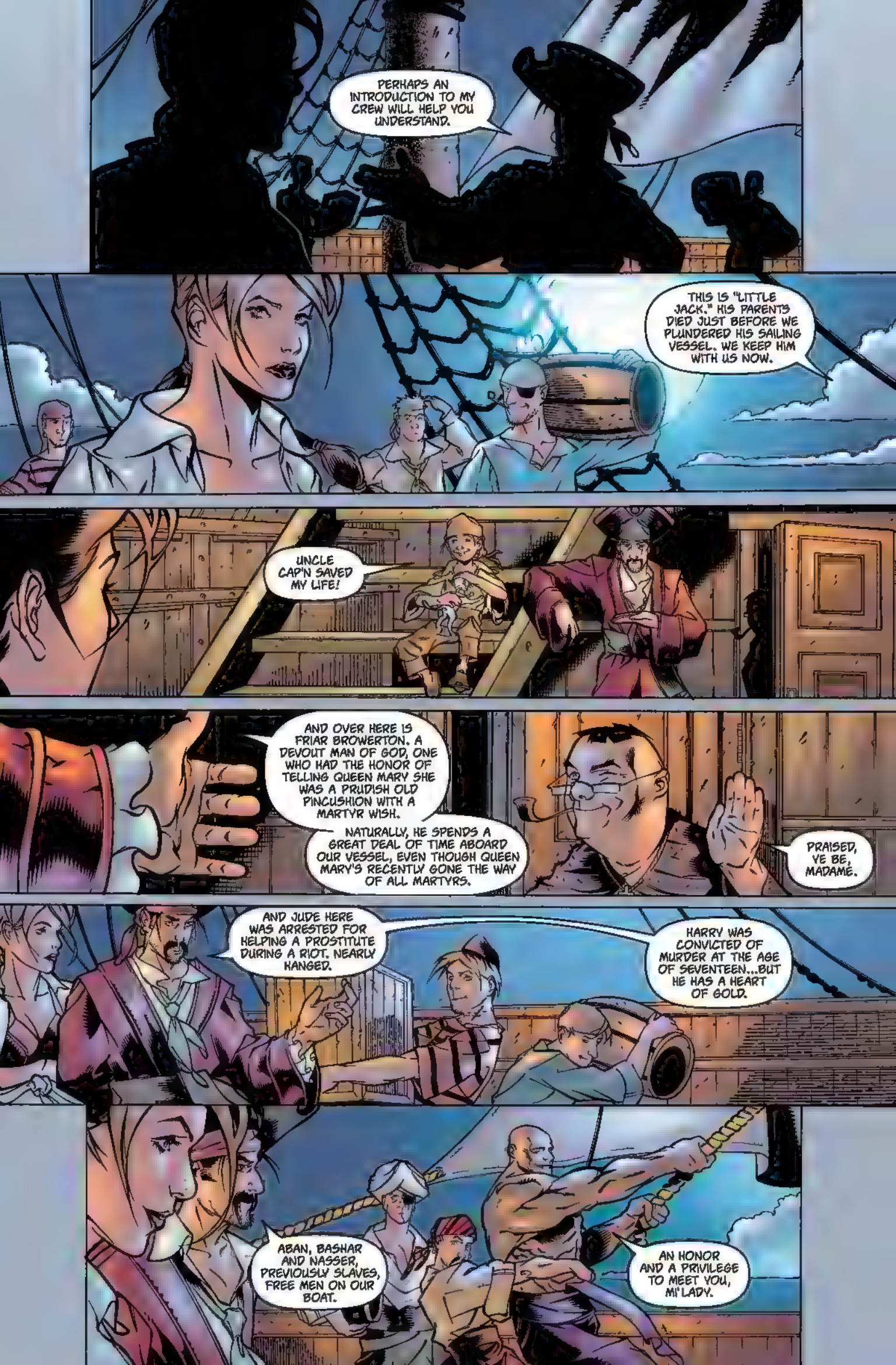
THERE WEREN'T ANY! BESIDES, SHE'S GOT 'UGE ARMS! AND BIG DEVIL GUNS!
YEAH, SHE TOOK ALL OF US DOWN IN ONE FELL SWOOP!
WHERE'S THE LOOT?
SHE'S DANGEROUS. A REGULAR BUCCANEER THAT LADY!
I SAY NO LOOT, WE BLOW THE SHIP OUTTA THE WATER.
WHAT GOOD IS SHE TO US ANYWAY? LET'S BLOW 'ER UP. SOMETHING FUN FOR US!
BUT THOSE DEVIL GUNS. WE OUGHT TO GET OUR 'ANDS ON THOSE!
GENTLEMEN, GENTLEMEN, PLEASE.
YOU WOULD WASTE AN OPPORTUNITY TO INVITE ONE SO SKILLED AS TO CHASE OUR FINEST WARRIORS AWAY IN A SINGLE ENCOUNTER?
I DARESAY I'M ASHAMED OF YOU, BROTHERS.
NO, WE WILL OFFER HER A PARTNERSHIP. WE'LL BE FAIR, COURTEOUS.
GENTLE, AND GENTLEMANLY.
YES, SIR.
THEN, IF SHE REFUSES TO JOIN, WE WILL OF COURSE OBLITERATE HER.

GREETINGS, FAIR LADY.
I'M CAPTAIN JONATHAN KAGAN, AT YOUR UTMOST SERVICE.
SO LONG AS YOU HAVE THOSE LOVELY GUNS POINTED AT ME, THAT IS.
I HAVE NOTHING HERE YOU COULD POSSIBLY WANT. SO WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE?
IT'S VERY SIMPLE, REALLY. MY BROTHERS AND I SAIL THE SEAS LOOKING FOR ANY SHIP WHERE WE MIGHT ACQUIRE CANVAS, EQUIPMENT, FOOD...AND RARE BEAUTIES.
YES, I CAN DISCERN YOU'RE PIRATES BY THE BAD BREATH, FOUL MOUTHS AND EYE PATCHES.
WE'RE NOT PIRATES! MY CREW AND I ARE PRIVATEERS. I CAN SHOW YOU THE CHARTER GRANTED ME BY QUEEN ELIZABETH HERSELF.
SHE'S RATHER FOND OF ME.
SOME WOMEN LACK A CERTAIN EYE FOR CHARACTER.
I PLAN ON KEEPING YOU HERE UNTIL YOUR SHIP BACKS OFF AND LETS ME ON MY WAY. THEN, YOU CAN TAKE THE DINGHY AND WAIT FOR YOUR MEN TO PICK YOU UP.
INCREDIBLY CLEVER OF YOU. A REAL ROGUE'S ESCAPE.
WE MIGHT NOT HAVE DISCOVERED ANY FOOD, OR EQUIPMENT OF USE TO US ON THIS STOP, BUT I THINK WE FOUND OUR RARE BEAUTY.
FLATTERY WILL GET YOU MAROONED.

PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO HEAR WHY I CAME OVER, BEFORE YOU KIDNAP ME.
VERY WELL.
MY MEN ARE MOST IMPRESSED WITH YOUR ABILITIES. IT'S NOT OFTEN WE FIND A PERSON OF CHARACTER ON A SAILING VESSEL.
USUALLY IT'S YOUR RUN OF THE MILL ARISTOCRACY OR UNLEARNED RUFFIANS HAULING THE ROPES.
WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU SAYING?
JOIN US.
OR...?
OR WE CAN SIMPLY LEAVE YOU ON YOUR SHIP, OF COURSE --
YOU'LL TAKE EVERYTHING OFF IT AND LEAVE ME STRANDED WITH NO SAILS OR FOOD.
THAT IS, IF YOU CAN SURVIVE MY GUNS TO LOOT ME.
CAN YOU SURVIVE OURS?


A REGULAR GENTLEMEN'S CHOICE, I SEE.
IT WOULD APPEAR THE ONLY SUITABLE CHOICE FOR A LADY LIKE YOURSELF.
I MEAN, I PROBABLY COULD HAVE SURVIVED THE ONSLAUGHT.
BUT I WASN'T ITCHING FOR A FIGHT.
NOT WHEN I COULD GET MY HANDS ON WHAT SEEMED LIKE AN AUTHENTIC PIRATE SHIP FROM THE AGE OF EXPLORATION.
THE SHEER SIZE AND POWER OF THE VESSEL WAS AMAZING. THE REASON IT WAS ON THE HIGH SEAS...UNKNOWN.

MI' LADY.
THANK YOU.
I GET DIBS ON THE SAILS!
IS THERE ANYTHING I MIGHT GET FOR YOU, LADY...?
LARA CROFT. LADY CROFT, I SUPPOSE.
LADY CROFT?
ALL FAIR AND SHARED!
HAHA! PURE GOLD COMPASS!
BOY ARE THEY GONNA BE UPSET WHEN THEY LEARN WHAT "GOLD PLATE" IS.
EXPLAIN SOMETHING FOR ME, KAGAN.
YES, MI' LADY?
HOW CAN YOU BE SO IRRESISTABLY WELL-MANNERED AND DOWNRIGHT DEMOCRATIC WHILE YOU STEAL MY LOOT?

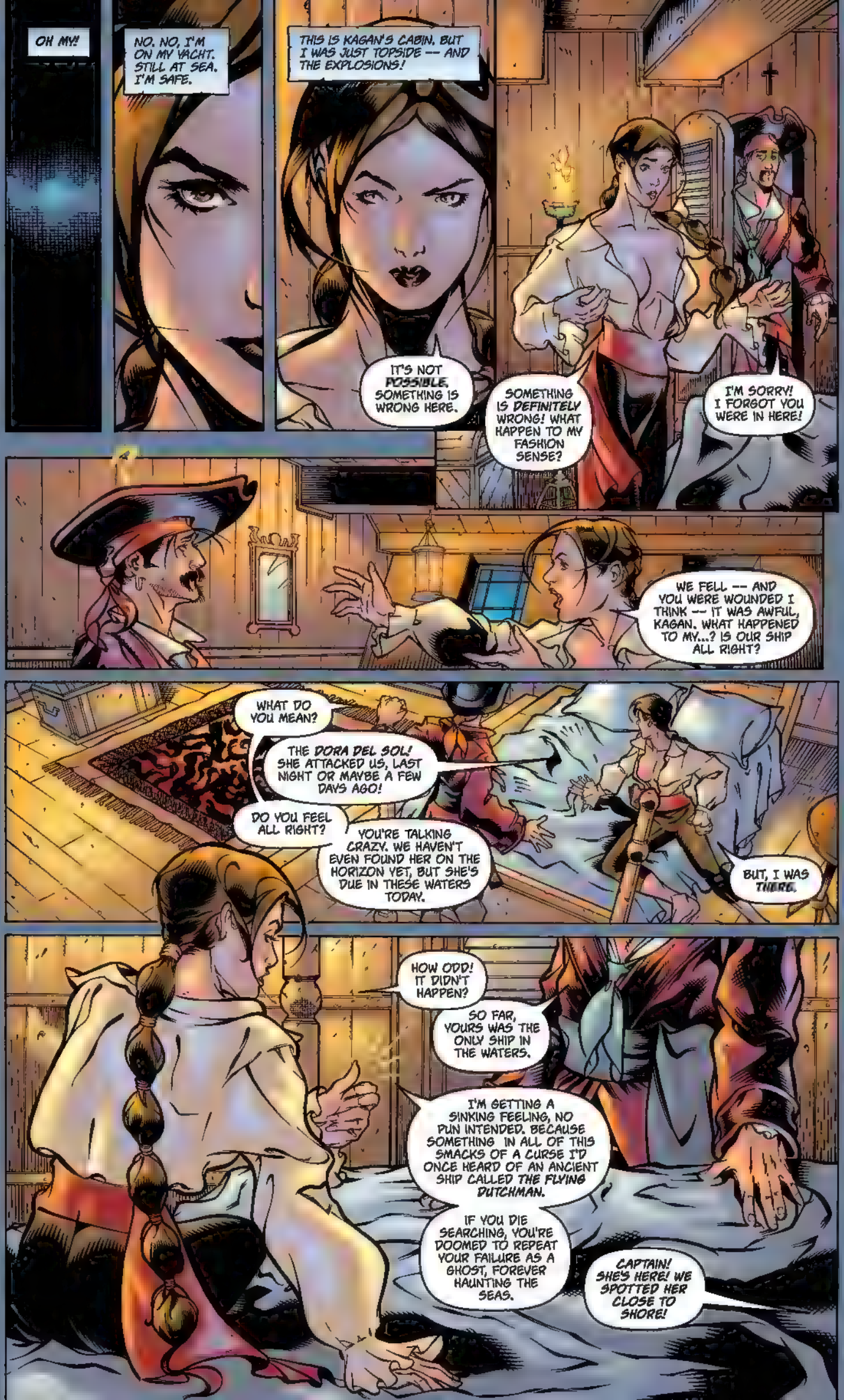

PERHAPS AN INTRODUCTION TO MY CREW WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND.
THIS IS "LITTLE JACK." HIS PARENTS DIED JUST BEFORE WE PLUNDERED HIS SAILING VESSEL. WE KEEP HIM WITH US NOW.
UNCLE CAP'N SAVED MY LIFE!
AND OVER HERE IS FRIAR BROWERTON. A DEVOUT MAN OF GOD, ONE WHO HAD THE HONOR OF TELLING QUEEN MARY SHE WAS A PRUDISH OLD PINCUSHION WITH A MARTYR WISH.
NATURALLY, HE SPENDS A GREAT DEAL OF TIME ABOARD OUR VESSEL, EVEN THOUGH QUEEN MARY'S RECENTLY GONE THE WAY OF ALL MARTYRS.
PRAISED, YE BE, MADAME.
AND JUDE HERE WAS ARRESTED FOR HELPING A PROSTITUTE DURING A RIOT. NEARLY HANGED.
HARRY WAS CONVICTED OF MURDER AT THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN...BUT HE HAS A HEART OF GOLD.
ABAN, BASHAR AND NASSER, PREVIOUSLY SLAVES, FREE MEN ON OUR BOAT.
AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE TO MEET YOU, MI'LADY.

WE'RE MORE THAN FREE OUT HERE THOUGH, WE'RE RESPECTED BROTHERS.
WE'RE GOOD MATES! BEST FRIENDS!
ALWAYS WATCHIN' EACH OTHER'S BACKS, YOU KNOW?
OR SCRATCHIN' 'EM! HAHA!
LET'S GET YOU SETTLED INTO YOUR QUARTERS.
YOU'RE SAYING YOU RUN A DEMOCRACY OUT HERE? I'M NOT QUITE CERTAIN I BELIEVE ALL THIS.
NO ONE BROUGHT ABOARD A PIRATE SHIP BELIEVES IT AT FIRST. IT'LL TAKE YOU SOME TIME.
TIME WELL SPENT IN HERE, BEHIND THE SAFETY OF A LOCKING DOOR.
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU WERE BROTHERS.
OH, WE ARE. BUT YOU'RE ALSO OF THE FAIRER SEX.
NOT THAT IT SHOWS!
AND...UNTIL YOU GET COMFORTABLE AROUND US, I'D LIKE YOU TO FEEL AS IF YOU HAVE SOME CONTROL OF YOUR SITUATION.
THIS IS YOUR CABIN?
YOURS NOW.
CAPTAIN! SHE'S HERE! WE SPOTTED HER CLOSE TO SHORE!

IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME!
WHAT'S THAT—?
BRING HER AROUND, STARBOARD, STARBOARD, PULL SAILS!
I WANTED A GOOD LOOK AT WHAT THEY WERE SO EXCITED ABOUT.
DORA DEL SOL...THAT MEANS "GOLD OF THE SUN"...LUCKY FOR ME I TOOK SPANISH IN GRADE SCHOOL WITH MS. BLEVINS.
WE'LL OVERTAKE HER. SHE CAN BARELY MOVE WITH ALL THAT TREASURE!
HUZZAH!
THIS IS IT BOYS, QUEEN'S CHARGE, BE ON THE READY.
KAGAN, YOU'RE A LOT SMALLER THAN THAT SHIP.

AYE, LOVE, BUT WE'RE FASTER THAN THAT SHIP AND MORE HEAVILY MANNED AND ARMORED.
I DON'T KNOW, IT LOOKS PRETTY --
ZZZZZZZZZZ
WISHHH
KABLAMM!
THEY'RE ARMED ALREADY!
BLOODY HELL!
KEEP THE CHARGE! GET BEHIND HER!
WHAT GOOD WILL THAT DO?
LESS CANNONS CARRIED IN THE REAR OF HER VESSEL.
GET MOVING, BOYS!
I CAN'T GET THE WIND, CAPTAIN!
THE CURRENT'S AGAINST US!!
CAPTAIN! LOOK OUT!
BLAM!

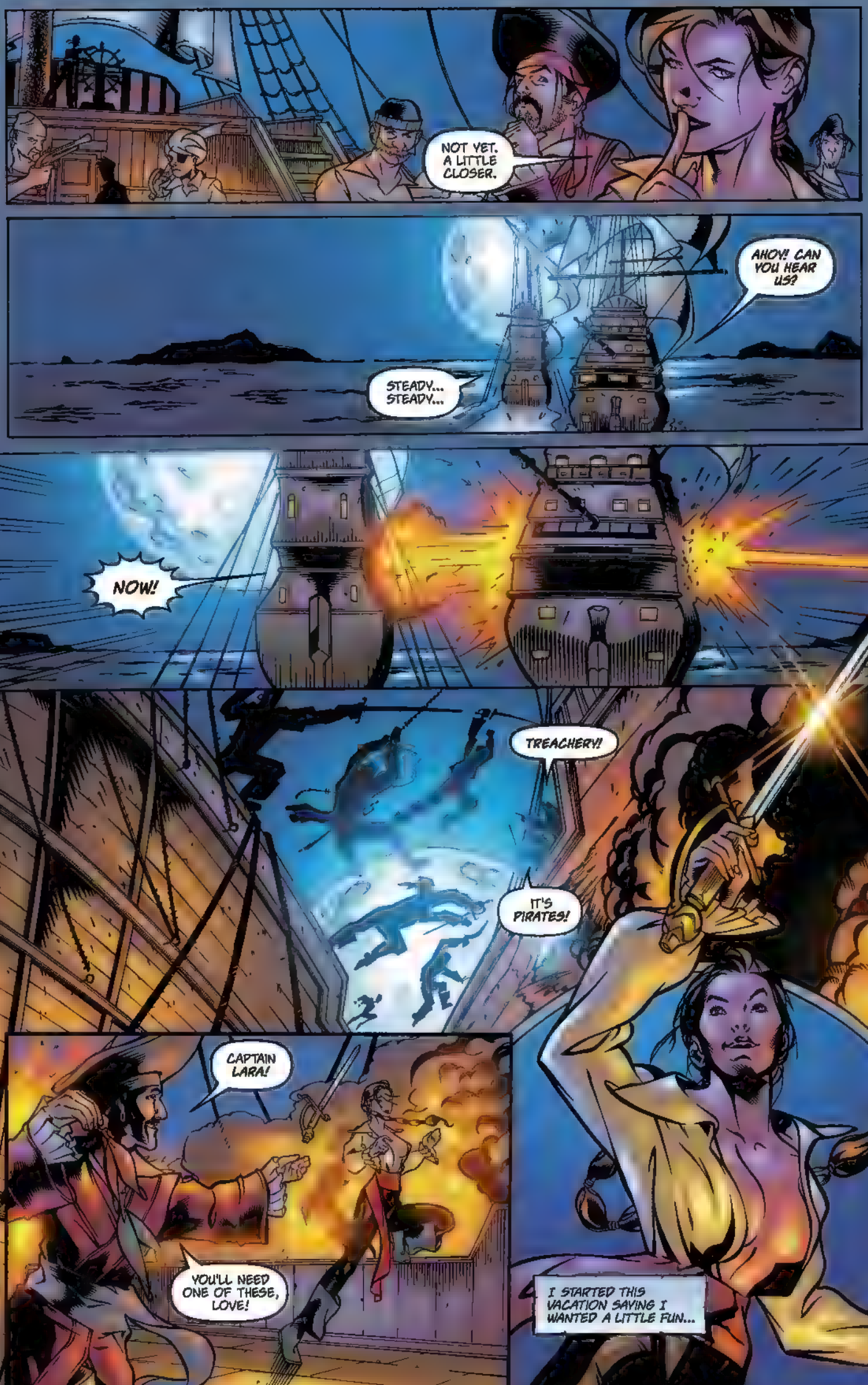
HUGGGH--AH!!!
LARA?
LITTLE JACK?
ANYONE?
HELP!


OH MY!
NO. NO, I'M ON MY YACHT. STILL AT SEA. I'M SAFE.
THIS IS KAGAN'S CABIN. BUT I WAS JUST TOPSIDE -- AND THE EXPLOSIONS!
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE. SOMETHING IS WRONG HERE.
SOMETHING IS DEFINITELY WRONG! WHAT HAPPEN TO MY FASHION SENSE?
I'M SORRY! I FORGOT YOU WERE IN HERE!
WE FELL -- AND YOU WERE WOUNDED I THINK -- IT WAS AWFUL, KAGAN. WHAT HAPPENED TO MY...? IS OUR SHIP ALL RIGHT?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE DORA DEL SOL! SHE ATTACKED US, LAST NIGHT OR MAYBE A FEW DAYS AGO!
DO YOU FEEL ALL RIGHT?
YOU'RE TALKING CRAZY. WE HAVEN'T EVEN FOUND HER ON THE HORIZON YET, BUT SHE'S DUE IN THESE WATERS TODAY.
BUT, I WAS THERE.
HOW ODD! IT DIDN'T HAPPEN?
SO FAR, YOURS WAS THE ONLY SHIP IN THE WATERS.
I'M GETTING A SINKING FEELING, NO PUN INTENDED. BECAUSE SOMETHING IN ALL OF THIS SMACKS OF A CURSE I'D ONCE HEARD OF AN ANCIENT SHIP CALLED THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.
IF YOU DIE SEARCHING, YOU'RE DOOMED TO REPEAT YOUR FAILURE AS A GHOST, FOREVER HAUNTING THE SEAS.
CAPTAIN! SHE'S HERE! WE SPOTTED HER CLOSE TO SHORE!

YOU GETTING THAT SENSE OF "BEEN THERE DONE THAT," TOO?
I --- YOU ---
CAPTAIN! GET UP HERE!
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME!
NO WAIT! I THINK I'VE FIGURED IT OUT!
THIS IS HAPPENING JUST LIKE BEFORE --- IT'S HAPPENING ALL OVER AGAIN!
CAPTAIN, YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO ME! BEFORE WE'RE ALL PULLED IN AGAIN!
BRING HER AROUND, STARBOARD, STARBOARD, PULL SAILS!
NO! BELAY THAT ORDER!
LISTEN, I KNOW WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO. YOU WERE JUST ABOUT TO SAY:
"WE'LL OVERTAKE HER. SHE CAN BARELY MOVE WITH ALL THAT TREASURE!
THIS IS IT BOYS, QUEEN'S CHARGE, BE ON THE READY."
YES. YES, I WAS.
DON'T DO THAT, YOU'LL GET US ALL KILLED!

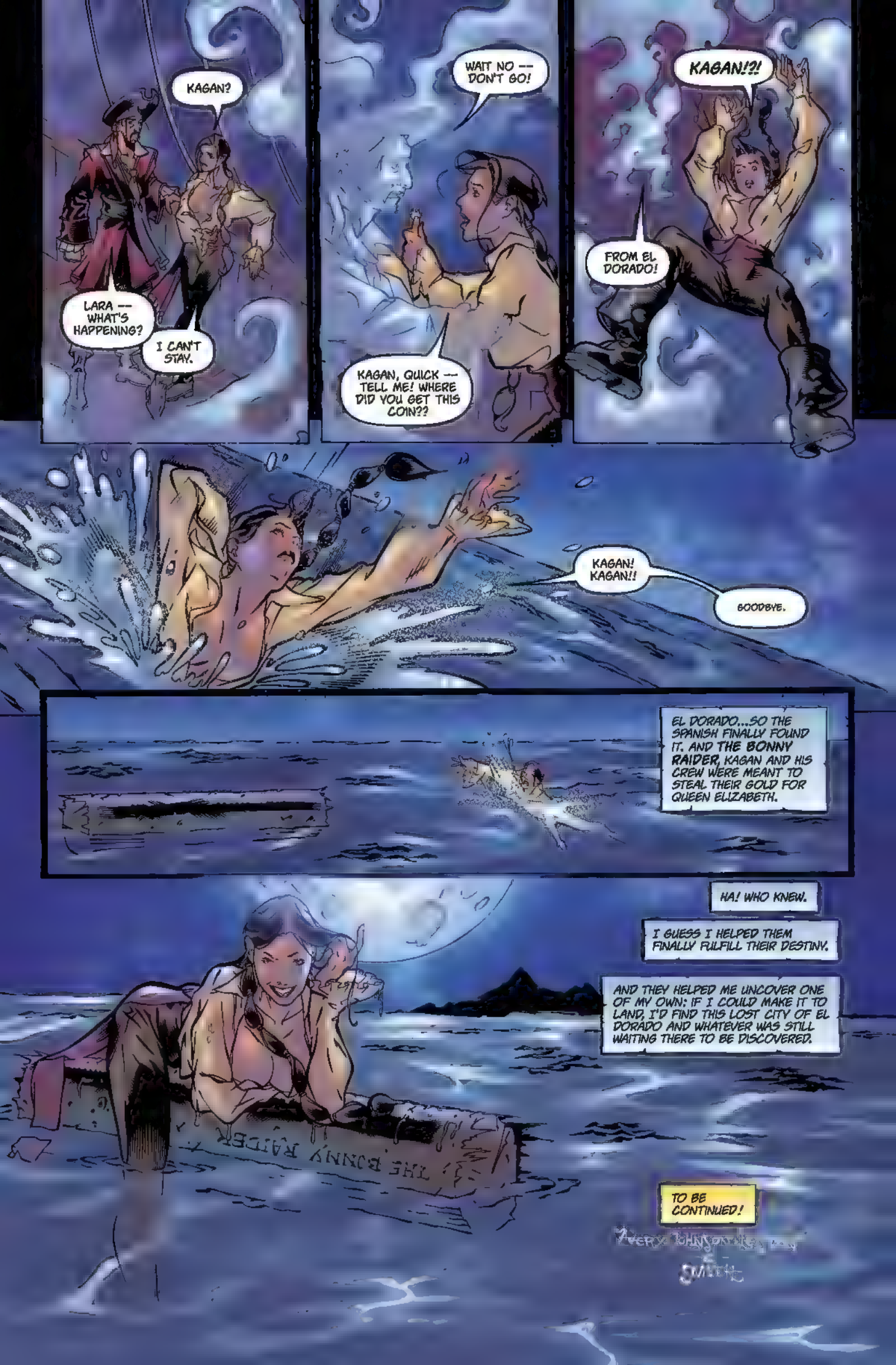
ARE YOU CHALLENGING MY AUTHORITY?
YES, BUT YOU SAID THIS SHIP WAS A DEMOCRACY. KAGAN, IF I'M WRONG, YOU CAN MAKE ME WALK THAT PLANK. BUT IF I'M RIGHT, WE'LL TAKE HOME THE MOTHERLODE.
THEN I WASH MY HANDS OF ALL RESPONSIBILITY.
THE SHIP'S YOURS. I HAND OVER THE HELM. IF YOU FAIL US, IT WILL BE THE END OF YOU.
PROBABLY THE END OF ALL OF US. HMM. WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME BEFORE WE'RE SPOTTED.
GET EVERY AVAILABLE ROPE WE HAVE. HAUL EVERY HEAVY ITEM TO THE SURFACE!
TIE THEM UP! HOIST THEM OVER THE SIDE!
BUT THAT'S GOING TO SLOW US DOWN!
EXACTLY!
CAPTAIN, TAKE THE PIRATE'S FLAG DOWN.
WHAT?!

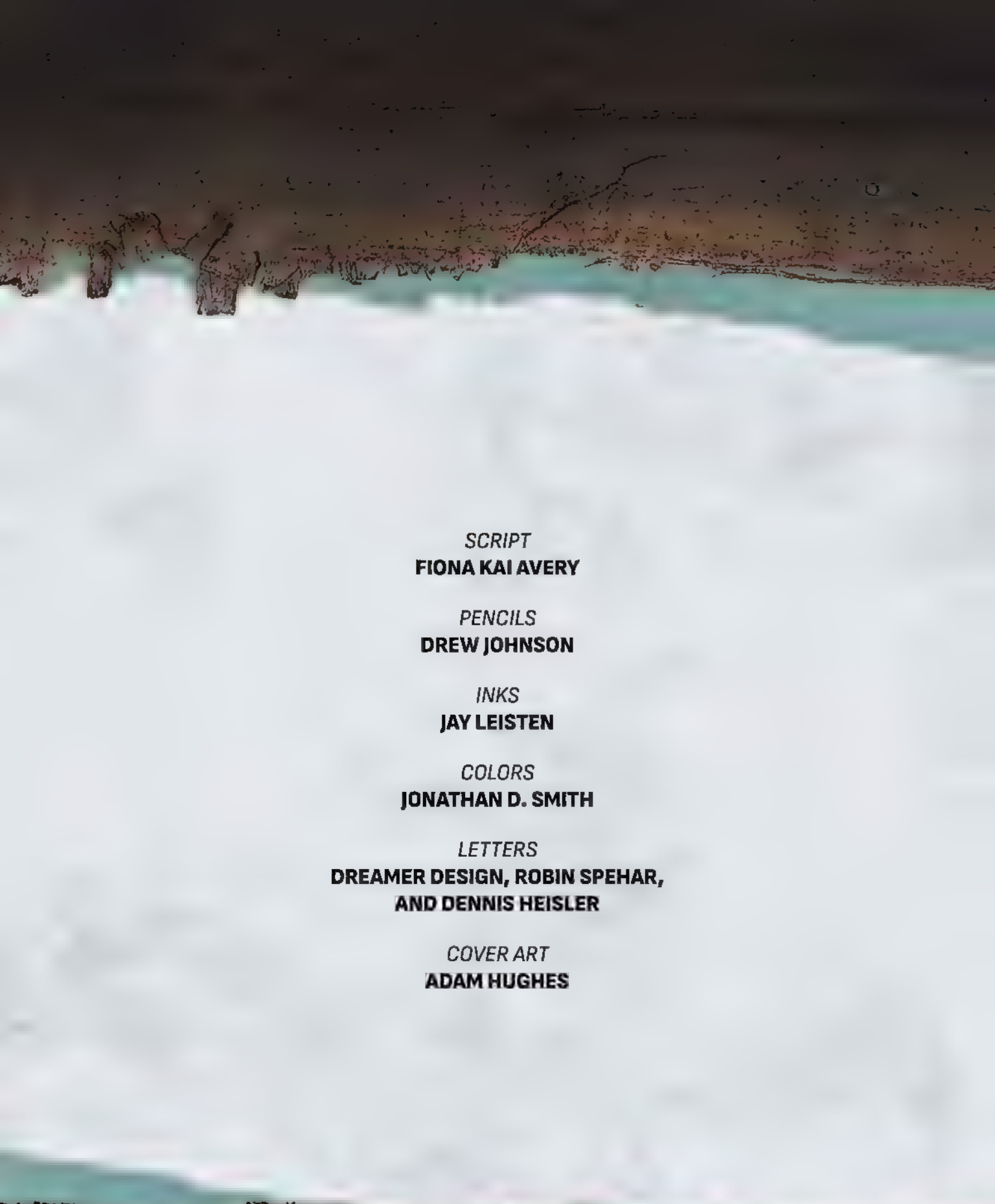
CAPTAIN, THIS IS MADNESS!
I'D DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING FOR YOU, LADY, BUT TAKING DOWN MY FLAG IS NOT AN OPTION.
WHAT'S THE MOTHER OF ALL INVENTION?
NECESSITY?
NO! DECEPTION! BY THE TIME SHE GETS HERE, WE'LL BE LIMPING ALONG LIKE A WOUNDED, HEAVILY-LADEN FRIGATE FROM BRITAIN.
SHE'LL OFFER US HELP. WE'LL HAVE OUR CANNONS LOADED.
TRUST ME.
BRING IT DOWN.
AHOY! ARE... YOU...ALL... RIGHT?


NOT YET. A LITTLE CLOSER.
AHOY! CAN YOU HEAR US?
STEADY... STEADY...
NOW!
TREACHERY!
IT'S PIRATES!
CAPTAIN LARA!
YOU'LL NEED ONE OF THESE, LOVE!
I STARTED THIS VACATION SAYING I WANTED A LITTLE FUN...

NOW THIS IS MY IDEA OF FUN!
THE BONNY RAIDER

THREE SWASH-BUCKLING HOURS LATER...
YOU CALLED ME "CAPTAIN" LARA.
WOULD YOU TAKE IT, IF I OFFERED IT TO YOU?
HEAVENS NO. I MEAN, A GIRL COULD GET USED TO THIS.
VERY USED TO THIS.
BUT THIS IS YOUR SHIP.
NOT THAT I'D LET THE OTHER MEN EVER KNOW SUCH A CONFESSION...BUT I'D BE MORE THAN WILLING TO SERVE UNDER YOU.
IN ANY CAPACITY.
ROGUE!
CHARMING, THOUGHTFUL, GENTLEMANLY, DARING, PROTECTIVE--
-- BUT STILL A ROGUE.
ADMIT IT, YOU HAD FUN PLAYING WITH US ROGUES.
WHERE DID YOU SAY THIS GOLD CAME FROM AGAIN?
LARA, STAY WITH US.


KAGAN?
LARA -- WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I CAN'T STAY.
WAIT NO -- DON'T GO!
KAGAN, QUICK -- TELL ME! WHERE DID YOU GET THIS COIN??
KAGAN!?!
FROM EL DORADO!
KAGAN! KAGAN!!
GOODBYE.
EL DORADO...SO THE SPANISH FINALLY FOUND IT. AND THE BONNY RAIDER, KAGAN AND HIS CREW WERE MEANT TO STEAL THEIR GOLD FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH.
HA! WHO KNEW.
I GUESS I HELPED THEM FINALLY FULFILL THEIR DESTINY.
AND THEY HELPED ME UNCOVER ONE OF MY OWN: IF I COULD MAKE IT TO LAND, I'D FIND THIS LOST CITY OF EL DORADO AND WHATEVER WAS STILL WAITING THERE TO BE DISCOVERED.
THE BONNY RAIDER
TO BE CONTINUED!



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COVER ART
ADAM HUGHES

LOST AT SEA, FLOATING ON THE DEBRIS OF A PIRATE SHIP— A GHOST SHIP—
ONE THAT HAD LOOKED UPON THE FACE OF EL DORADO'S TREASURES.
NO, IT WASN'T A DREAM. I WAKE TO FIND I'VE WASHED ASHORE SOMEWHERE DESOLATE.
NOT A SOUL IN SIGHT, BUT I CAN GET A GOOD IDEA OF WHERE I AM FROM THE POSITION OF THE SUN IN THE SKY AND BY THE DENSE FOREST PAST THE BEACH.

NNNNNGH, I'M SORE.
GUNS WON'T BE WORKING AFTER THAT SALT-WATER SOAK. BUT MY PACK HAS HELD UP, I'LL HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT'S STILL SALVAGEABLE INSIDE.
AND THEN THERE'S YOU.
MY ONLY HOPE IN FINDING THE LOST CITY OF EL DORADO.
JUST AS SOON AS I FIND MY WAY BACK TO CIVILIZATION.
SEÑORITA! BUENOS DÍAS!
YOU ARE ALIVE! I SAW YOU FROM MY FISHING BOAT. HERE!
DRINK.
WATER! OH... AH...!

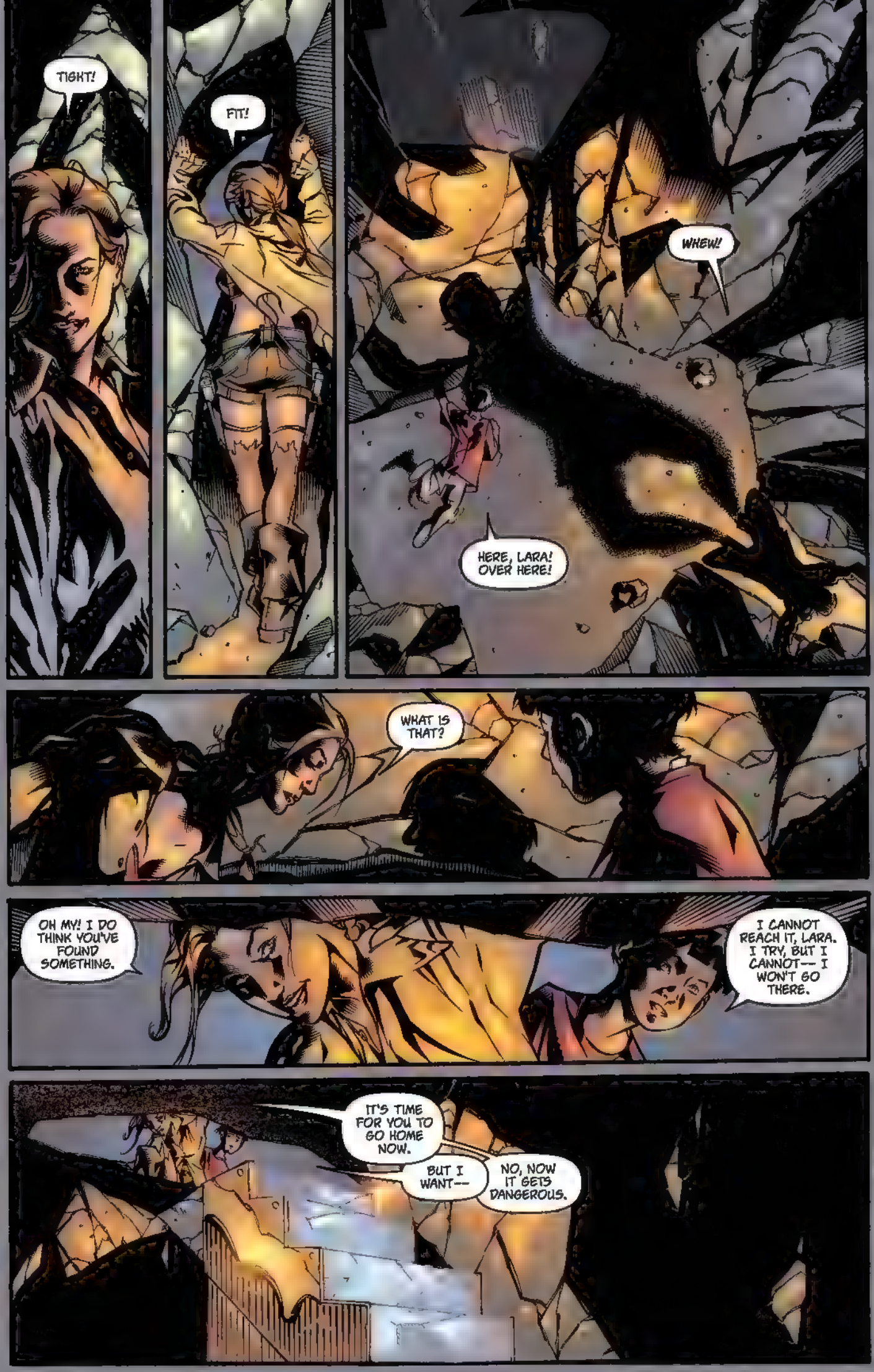
VILLAGE? TOWN? CAN YOU HELP ME?
I HELP YOU. COME. COME WITH ME.
OH, SEÑORITA YOU DROPPED SOMETHING.
NO, IT CANNOT BE! THIS COIN— EL DORADO!
DO YOU KNOW EL DORADO?
NO! I SAW NOTHING. THAT'S YOURS AND I WANT NO PART!
PLEASE, TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW.

HE WOULDN'T TALK AT ALL AFTER THAT.
BUT HE DID TAKE ME TO HIS HOME, WHERE I RESTED.
YOU MUST EAT.
FISH, FRESH FISH. THAT SMELLS DELIGHTFUL.
JOSÉ, THEY WILL COME TO COLLECT TAXES SOON. HOW ARE WE TO EXPLAIN THIS--
NO, PEDRO. NOT NOW. SHE SLEEPS HERE.
WHERE AM I? WHAT COUNTRY ARE WE IN?
PERU! WE ARE A SMALL CLAN OF FISHERMEN, WEAVERS, AND POTTERY MAKERS HERE.
AND YOU'RE CALLED?
I AM JOSÉ. WHAT IS THAT THEY CALL YOU?
I'M LARA. AND I'M HERE TO FIND WHAT'S LEFT OF THE EL DORADO TREASURE.
LARA! LARA! I AM HUNGRY! SHARE YOUR FISH!
NO, EDUARDO!
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I DON'T MIND.

IT SEEMS YOUR VILLAGE COULD PROFIT FROM SOME TREASURE AS WELL.
YOUR CHILDREN ARE HUNGRY.
EDUARDO, YOU MAKE A NUISANCE OF YOURSELF!
HE'S NOT TELLING ME ANYTHING I DON'T ALREADY KNOW. YOU ARE POOR, I HAVE A COIN THAT WILL LEAD ME TO RICHES.
NO, NO, SEÑORITA!
WHY DON'T *YOU* COME WITH ME TO FIND EL DORADO?
I AM JUST A FISHERMAN! I AM NOT AN ADVENTURER!
I THINK YOUR PEOPLE COULD USE WHATEVER WE MIGHT FIND THERE. BUY, SELL OR TRADE. YOU COULD GET BETTER PROVISIONS, BLANKETS, FISHING EQUIPMENT...YOU NAME IT.
IT WOULD DO OUR PEOPLE GOOD. PERHAPS GET US OUT FROM UNDER THE THUMB OF SOME MERCENARIES WHO COME FOR TAXES ONCE A MONTH...
BUT, IT'S A CHILD'S FANTASY! NO ONE KNOWS WHERE EL DORADO IS. IT IS A QUEST THAT HAS KILLED EVERYONE SEEKING RICHES THERE.

BUT I KNOW WHERE EL DORADO IS!
NO YOU DON'T, BE QUIET, LITTLE ONE.
BUT I DO! I PLAY BY THE GATES EVERY DAY UNTIL SUPPER! THERE'S CRYSTAL AND SAND AND GOLD THERE!
YOU KNOW IT WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME A CHILD HAS SHOWN TOMB-RAIDERS, OR ARCHAEOLOGISTS WHERE TO STRIKE GOLD.
I'VE HEARD A LITTLE BOY RECENTLY GAVE A TOUR OF ALEXANDRIA'S NECROPOLIS WHEN NO ONE ELSE COULD FIND IT.
YOU CAN SHOW US THE WAY, BUT YOU CAN'T COME WITH US INSIDE. IF YOU AGREE, I WILL LET YOU TAKE US THERE. OTHERWISE, I CAN FIND IT MYSELF.
I AGREE.

WELL, HE CERTAINLY KNOWS WHERE SOMETHING IMPORTANT IS SECRETED AWAY.
WHETHER OR NOT THAT IS EL DORADO, IS ANOTHER STORY.
EDUARDO, WAIT!
YOU EXPECT ME TO FOLLOW YOU IN THERE?
I DON'T KNOW IF I'M GONNA MAKE IT!


TIGHT!
FIT!
WHEW!
HERE, LARA! OVER HERE!
WHAT IS THAT?
OH MY! I DO THINK YOU'VE FOUND SOMETHING.
I CANNOT REACH IT, LARA. I TRY, BUT I CANNOT-- I WON'T GO THERE.
IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GO HOME NOW.
BUT I WANT--
NO, NOW IT GETS DANGEROUS.

WE HAD A PROMISE, DIDN'T WE?
YES, LARA.
HERE, YOU TAKE THIS COMPASS SO YOU WON'T GET LOST COMING BACK.
I WILL BRING YOU SOMETHING BACK, EDUARDO— THANK YOU!
I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE HE HASN'T TRIED TO GET IN THERE.
OW!
NO WONDER THE BOY COULDN'T DIG DOWN. IT'S ROCK-SOLID CLAY.
EASILY REMOVABLE, WITH TIME.
WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE FOR A STICK OF TNT THOUGH. A MUCH EASIER JOB THAT WAY.

IT IS MY EL DORADO, IT IS MY CITY. I WANT TO GO THERE.
WHERE IS THE AMERICAN WOMAN??
LISTEN, YOU RIVER-DWELLING RATS! WE HEARD ABOUT HER COMING TO YOUR HUTS--- I KNOW SHE'S HERE!
DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU WOULD SKIP TAX SEASON ON A MAD GOLD CHASE??
SHE'S HERE FOR EL DORADO--- AND WE WANT IT! YOUR VILLAGE ISN'T WORTHY.
NO, DON'T HURT ME!
THEN TELL US WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW!
AGH!!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE, LITTLE KID?
N--NOTHING!
WHAT'S THAT IN YOUR HAND?

BY ALL THE BLESSED SAINTS I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING THIS BEAUTIFUL IN MY LIFE.
IT RATHER MAKES IT ALL WORTH IT, DOESN'T IT?
THE RUNES MATCH.
LET'S SEE WHAT'S BEHIND DOOR NUMBER ONE, JOSÉ.

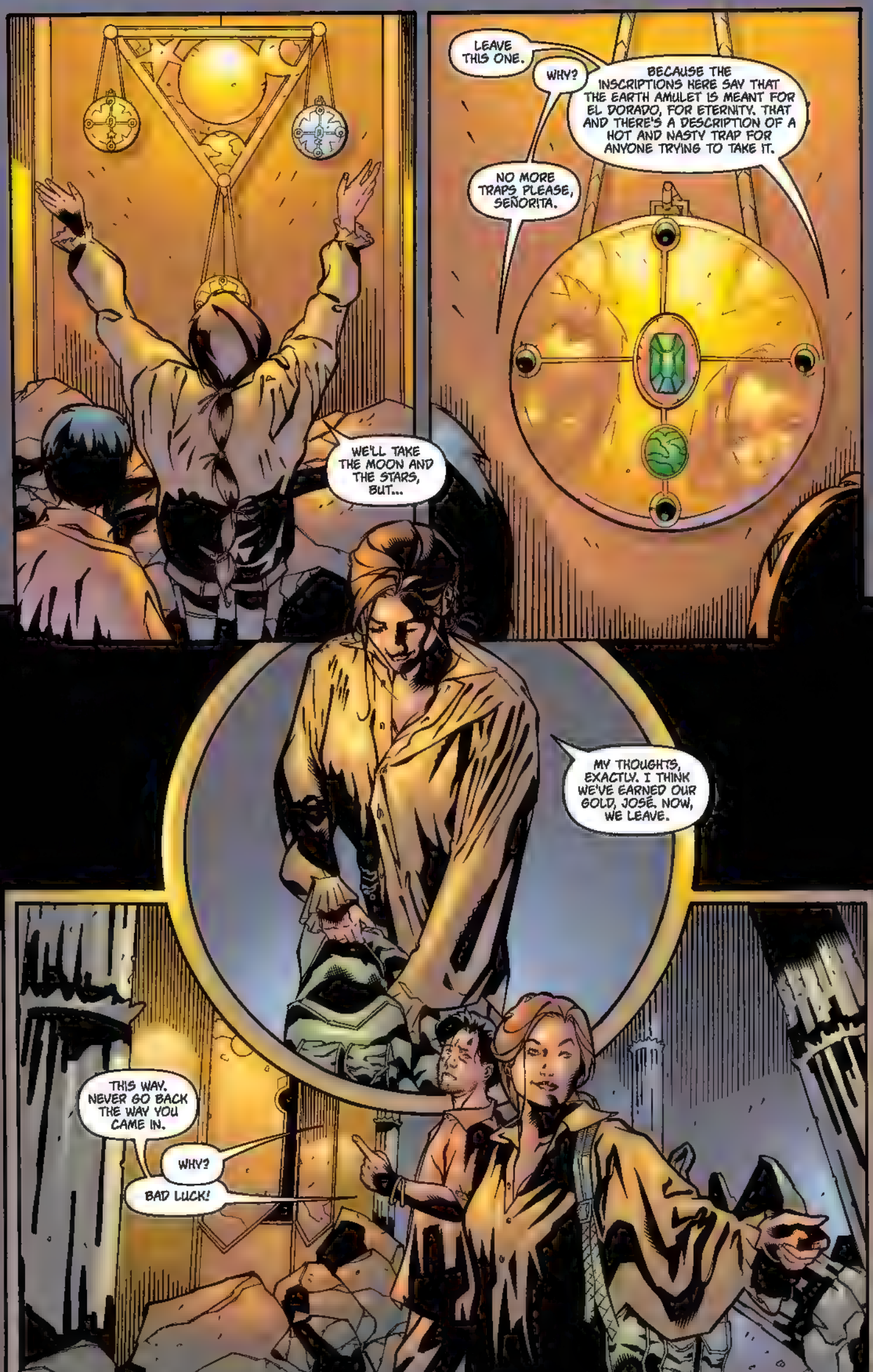
OF COURSE... LIKE THE SALT MINES OF POLAND, THEY MADE EL DORADO IN THE ACTUAL MINE.
NO WONDER NO ONE EVER FOUND EL DORADO. WE'VE ALL BEEN LOOKING ABOVE-GROUND.

A LITTLE LIGHTING...
AND WE'LL BE ABLE TO SEE WHAT'S LEFT.
WHAT ABOUT TRAPS?
YOU CAN TELL BY THE WAY CERTAIN STATUES, VASES, AND OTHER ARTIFACTS ARE MISSING FROM THE CORNERS OF THE ROOM. TRAPS ARE ALL DISMANTLED BY PREVIOUS LOOTERS.
WHO WAS HERE?
THE QUEEN OF SPAIN'S ARMADA, I BELIEVE. 1570? A LONG TIME AGO, CERTAINLY.
AFTER YOU, OF COURSE.

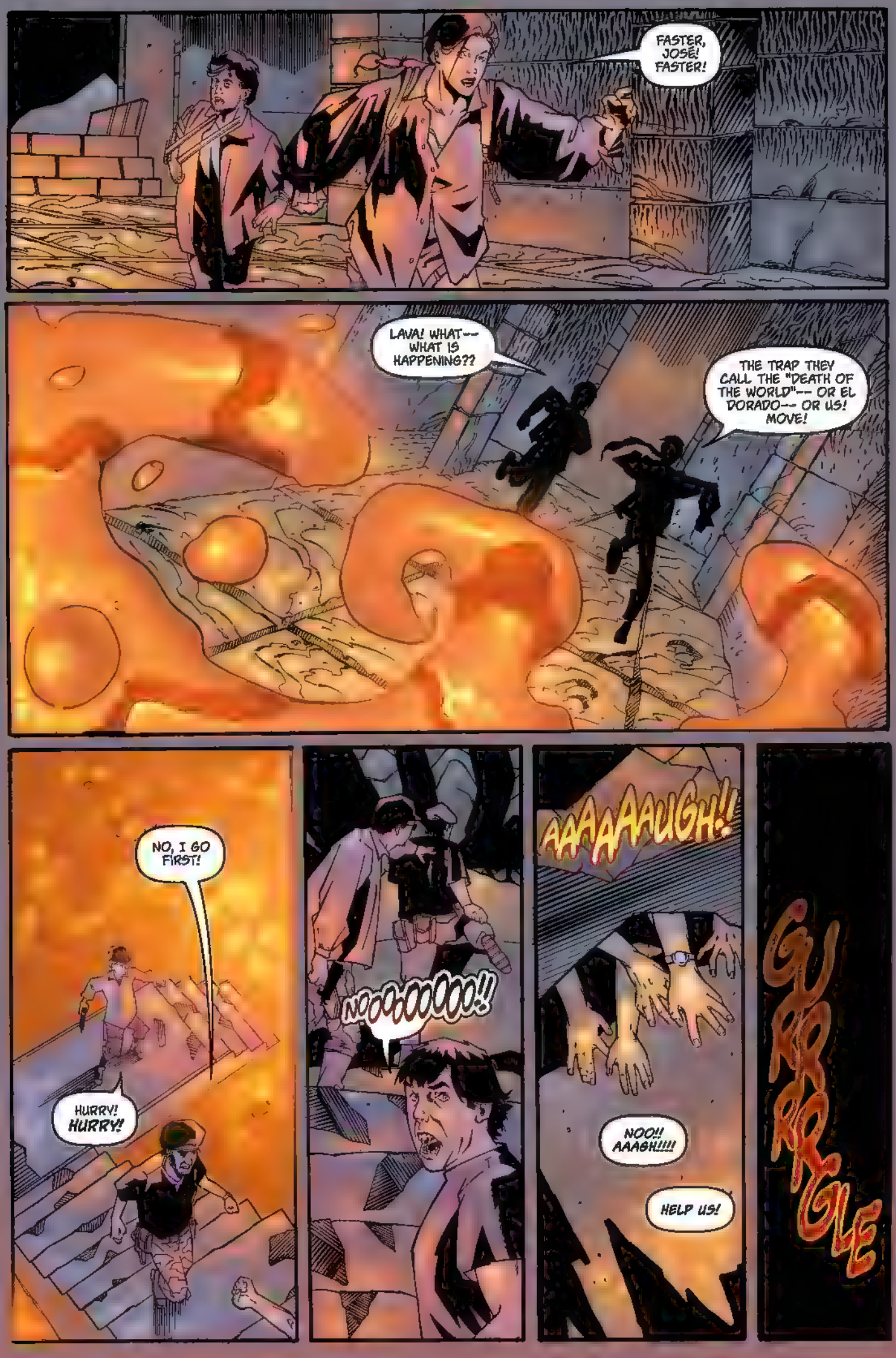
BUT I THINK THEY OVERLOOKED THIS.
WHAT IS IT?
A TRAP.
DON'T— YOU MIGHT—
BEHIND EVERY TRAP LIES GOLD, JOSÉ.
LARA LOOK OUT!
AAAAUGH!
JOSÉ!

BETTER NOT BE A TRICK, KID.
YOU GO FIRST.
THWUMP
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT—?
MUST BE SOMETHING GOING ON IN THERE! WE'RE MISSING OUT!
LET'S MOVE! MOVE!
GET OUTTA HERE, BOY!
LARA! LARA! WATCH OUT!
SHOO!

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT. I WOULD HAVE BEEN ALL RIGHT. OH, JOSÉ, YOU WERE BADLY HIT.
IS THAT ANY BETTER?
I-- I THINK SO. VERY DANGEROUS HERE.
NO, I'M GONNA WORK ON IT, JUST HANG ON.
YOU NEED A SPLINT BEFORE WE CAN GET MOVING.
THOSE AMULETS ARE BEAUTIFUL. GO GET YOUR GOLD.
NO, FIRST THINGS FIRST. WE TAKE CARE OF YOU.

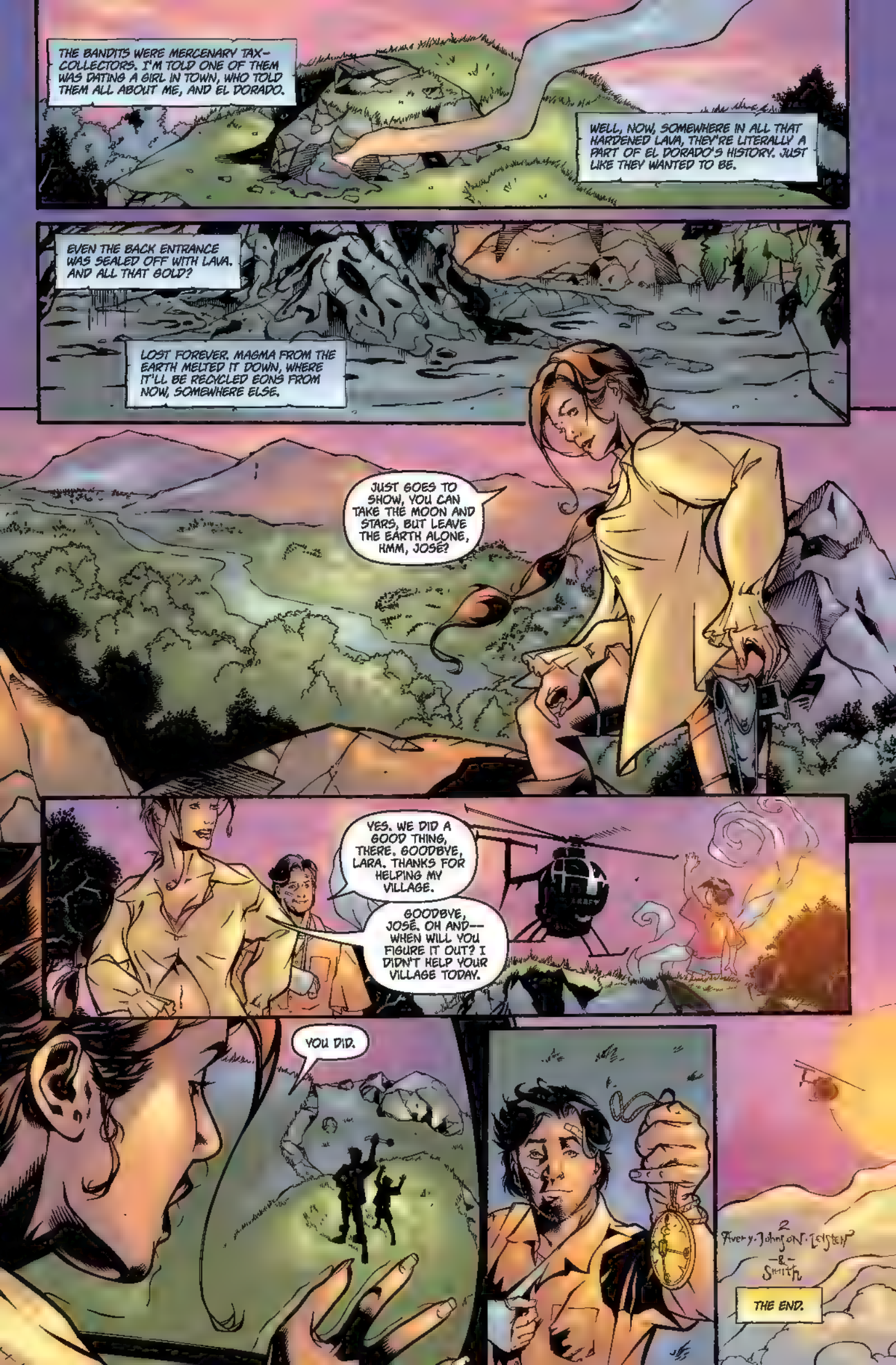

WE'LL TAKE THE MOON AND THE STARS, BUT...
LEAVE THIS ONE.
WHY?
BECAUSE THE INSCRIPTIONS HERE SAY THAT THE EARTH AMULET IS MEANT FOR EL DORADO, FOR ETERNITY. THAT AND THERE'S A DESCRIPTION OF A HOT AND NASTY TRAP FOR ANYONE TRYING TO TAKE IT.
NO MORE TRAPS PLEASE, SEÑORITA.
MY THOUGHTS, EXACTLY. I THINK WE'VE EARNED OUR GOLD, JOSÉ. NOW, WE LEAVE.
THIS WAY. NEVER GO BACK THE WAY YOU CAME IN.
WHY?
BAD LUCK!

PAH! THERE'S NOTHING HERE! THE WHOLE PLACE HAS BEEN EXCAVATED LONG AGO!
WHAT ABOUT THIS, BOSS?
HEY, THIS IS PRETTY NICE. WE MIGHT GET SOMETHING GOOD FOR IT--
WHAT DID-- OH NO!
WHAT'S HAPPENING!?
AHHHHHH! HELP!
NOOOOO! GO BACK! BACK! THE WAY WE CAME!
OH BLOODY HELL! WE WERE FOLLOWED!
WE HAVE TO GO-- NOW!

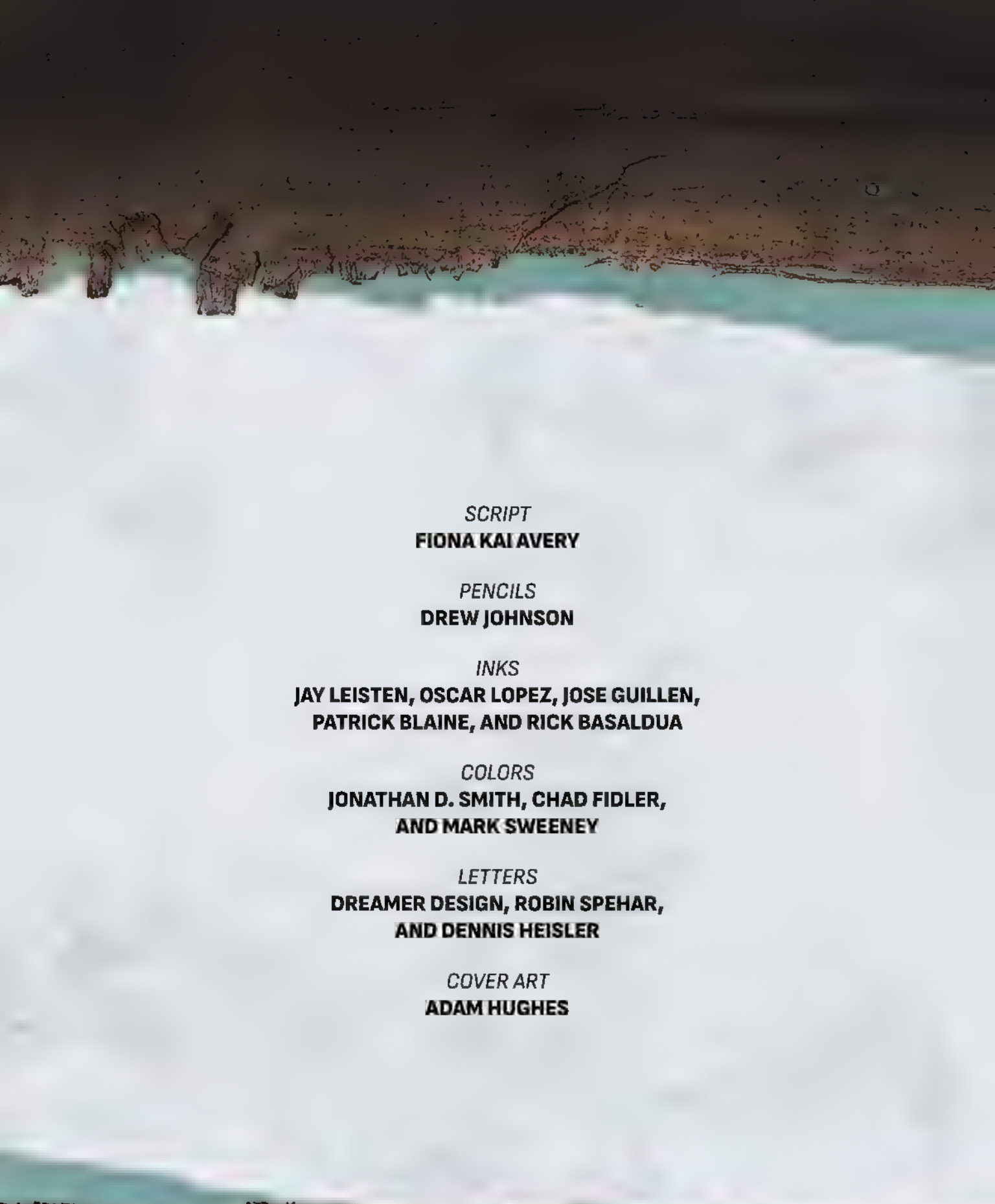

FASTER, JOSÉ! FASTER!
LAVA! WHAT-- WHAT IS HAPPENING??
THE TRAP THEY CALL THE "DEATH OF THE WORLD"-- OR EL DORADO-- OR US! MOVE!
NO, I GO FIRST!
HURRY! HURRY!
NOOOOOOO!!
AAAAAAUGH!!
NOO!! AAAGH!!!!
HELP US!
GURRRRGLE

AUGH!
I'M SORRY!...SO MUCH PAIN.
JOSÉ!
I WON'T LEAVE YOU HERE!
I THINK I'D RATHER FACE THE—
LAVAAAAAAAAA!
AAAAAAAAAHHH!
SPLOOOSH!!
A LITTLE FARTHER, JOSÉ, YOU CAN DO IT!
SPLUTTER!
HACK!
COUGH!
HSSSSSSSSS!

WHEW! NO MORE ADVENTURES FOR ME, SEÑORITA!
YOU DID PRETTY GOOD FOR YOUR FIRST TOMB RAID!
LAST TOMB RAID!
IT WAS WORTH IT. AND NOW, YOU NEED SOMETHING...
...A MEDAL OF HONOR, I THINK.
I WILL NEVER FORGET TODAY.
TAKE THIS.
FOR YOUR VILLAGE.


THE BANDITS WERE MERCENARY TAX-COLLECTORS. I'M TOLD ONE OF THEM WAS DATING A GIRL IN TOWN, WHO TOLD THEM ALL ABOUT ME, AND EL DORADO.
WELL, NOW, SOMEWHERE IN ALL THAT HARDENED LAVA, THEY'RE LITERALLY A PART OF EL DORADO'S HISTORY. JUST LIKE THEY WANTED TO BE.
EVEN THE BACK ENTRANCE WAS SEALED OFF WITH LAVA. AND ALL THAT GOLD?
LOST FOREVER. MAGMA FROM THE EARTH MELTED IT DOWN, WHERE IT'LL BE RECYCLED EONS FROM NOW, SOMEWHERE ELSE.
JUST GOES TO SHOW, YOU CAN TAKE THE MOON AND STARS, BUT LEAVE THE EARTH ALONE, HMM, JOSÉ?
YES. WE DID A GOOD THING, THERE. GOODBYE, LARA. THANKS FOR HELPING MY VILLAGE.
GOODBYE, JOSÉ. OH AND— WHEN WILL YOU FIGURE IT OUT? I DIDN'T HELP YOUR VILLAGE TODAY.
YOU DID.
Avery Johnson Leister & Smith
THE END.

JOURNEYS PART 3



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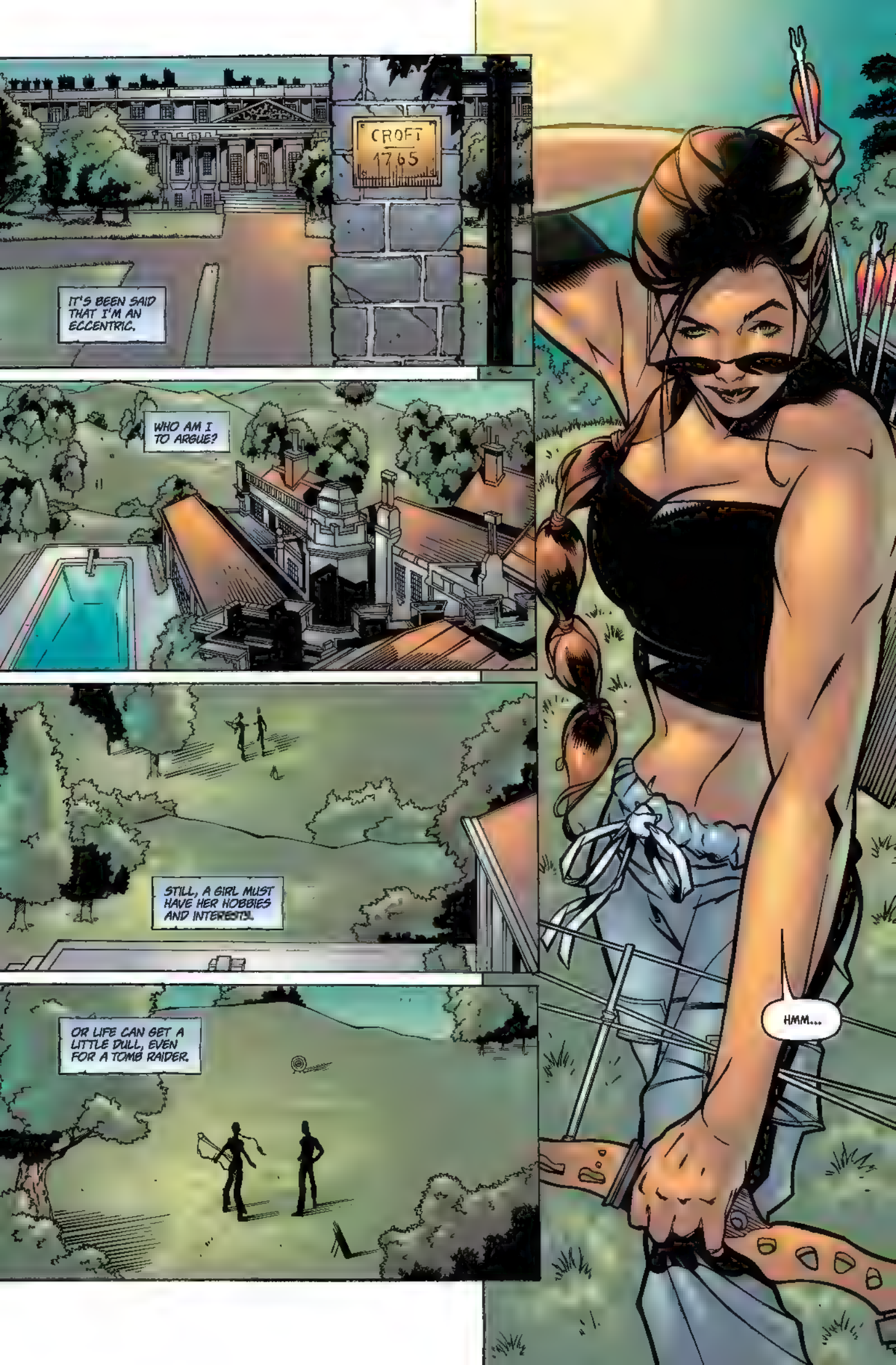

CROFT
1765
IT'S BEEN SAID THAT I'M AN ECCENTRIC.
WHO AM I TO ARGUE?
STILL, A GIRL MUST HAVE HER HOBBIES AND INTERESTS.
OR LIFE CAN GET A LITTLE DULL, EVEN FOR A TOMB RAIDER.
HMM...

IT'S ALL ABOUT FORM. IT'S NOT ABOUT HITTING THE TARGET. YOU AIM ONLY FOR YOURSELF.
I SEE.
SO WHEN DO I GET TO SHOOT IT?
YOUR ARM NEEDS TO BE HIGHER, FIRST.
YES, BUT WHEN DO I LET FLY??
AND YOU NEED A WIDER STANCE.

HOW ABOUT NOW? CAN WE SHOOT NOW?
LARA, THE MOST IMPORTANT SECRET OF ARCHERY IS THAT IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST.
NOW, YOU'RE JUST ABOUT RIGHT.
SO, NOW I CAN SHOOT IT?
MISS CROFT!
MISS CROFT!
WHAT IS IT, MILES?
THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE HERE TO SEE YOU.
THEY DON'T HAVE AN APPOINTMENT AND I'M BUSY--
--MISS CROFT!
I SAID I'M--!

I MEAN—!
THWOCK!
I'M NEVER TOO BUSY, GENTLEMEN.
BULLSEYE
RIGHT, THEN! I LIKE IT. LET'S DO THIS EVERY TUESDAY.

MILES, SEE TO SOME TEA FOR OUR GUESTS. AND, I THINK WE'LL HAVE SCONES TODAY.
YES, MISS CROFT.
I WASN'T EXPECTING GUESTS TODAY, WHICH IS WHY YOU FOUND ME ON THE ARCHERY RANGE.
YES, EXCUSE OUR INTERRUPTION BUT WE COME ON MOST URGENT BUSINESS. MY NAME IS MR. MCFADDEN.
AND THIS IS MY YOUNGER BROTHER TIMOTHY.
A PLEASURE. WHAT BRINGS YOU TO CROFT MANOR?
WE REPRESENT A SPECIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST AND CONSERVANCY.
THE ENDOWMENT FOR PRESERVATION OF AUTHENTIC SITES.
YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD OF US.
YES, I'M FAMILIAR WITH YOUR ORGANIZATION. NON-PROFIT, AND CERTIFIED, YOU'RE HIGHLY VISIBLE IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMUNITY.

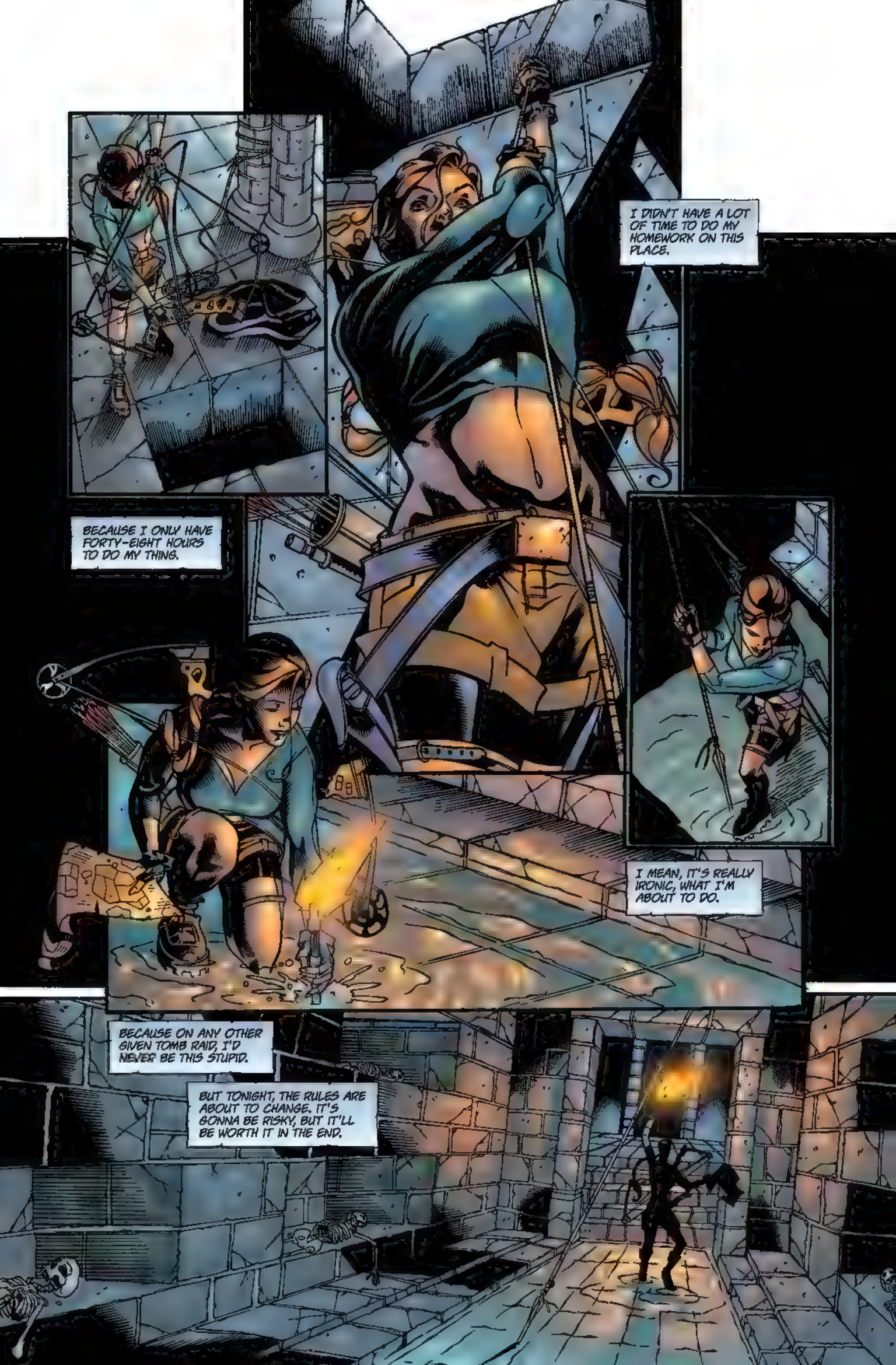
THEN YOU KNOW WE RAISE MONEY TO OUTBID INTERESTED BUYERS IN REAL ESTATE THAT HAVE PROVEN SUBSTANTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS.
YES, IT'S AN INTERESTING WAY TO PROBLEM SOLVE. MEMBERS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION PAY DUES THAT BECOME THE FUNDS TO BUY PRIVATE LANDS UP FOR SALE.
LANDS THAT NEED US TO PROTECT THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS WITHIN THEM. OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES MAY ONLY WANT TO LOOT OR BULLDOZE THE SITE.
LATER ON, WE CAN ALWAYS TURN OVER THE PROPERTY TO ANOTHER INTERESTED BUYER, WHEN IT'S BEEN EXCAVATED PROPERLY.
WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR THEN?
WE'VE COME ACROSS A FUNDING PROBLEM, MISS CROFT, AND WE WERE HOPING YOU COULD HELP US.
WELL, I DON'T USUALLY DONATE MY FUNDS IN THAT WAY, I'M MORE OF A HANDS ON KIND OF—
FORGIVE OUR BLUNTNESS, MISS CROFT. I UNDERSTAND YOUR POSITION. TIMOTHY IS EAGER, AND FORGOT THE MAIN POINT IN OUR VISIT TODAY.
WE THINK WE'VE FOUND THE ANCIENT CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

YOU MEAN THE CITIES OUT OF THE BIBLE THAT WERE DESTROYED BY—
BY GOD? YES. OR BY SOMETHING. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT YET, BUT WE DID FIND MAJOR CATASTROPHIC EVIDENCE AT BOTH CITIES, IN THE SAME STRATA.
ANY EVIDENCE AS TO THE ACTUAL NAMES OF THE CITIES YET? I MEAN THEY CAN'T ACTUALLY BE NAMED SODOM AND GOMORRAH BY THEIR INDIGENOUS INHABITANTS.
WE'RE NOT PERMITTED UPON THE GROUNDS, SO WE CAN'T FIND OUT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT PERMITTED— I MEAN IT'S THE FIND OF A LIFETIME IF YOU CAN PROVE—
PRECISELY THE POINT, MISS CROFT. THE CITY OF SODOM IS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY SO WE CAN COME AND GO AS WE PLEASE, TAKING SAMPLES, DIGGING FOR GOLD.
THE OTHER CITY IS OWNED BY A PRIVATE CITIZEN WHO HAS JUST PUT IT UP FOR SALE.
AS A CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX SITE.
YOU CAN'T HAVE SODOM AND NOT HAVE GOMORRAH!
WOULD YOU LIKE CREAM? SUGAR?
CREAM, THANKS.
PRECISELY. IT POSES QUITE A PROBLEM IN TERMS OF EXACT CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE IF WE CAN'T DIG IN BOTH CITIES.
WHO'S BUYING THE PLACE?
A MAN BY THE NAME OF MR. KAGAN.
KAGAN?
PROBABLY SOME CONTRACTOR. WE'VE NEVER HEARD OF HIM BEFORE THIS, BUT HE'S OUTBIDDING US AT EVERY TURN FOR THE PROPERTY. DO YOU KNOW HIM?

NEVER HEARD OF THE MAN.
HE APPARENTLY HAS QUITE A FORTUNE. WE HAVE GONE TOP DOLLAR FOR THE LAND.
CAN YOU HELP US, MISS CROFT?
IS THIS A MAP OF THE PROPERTY?
YES. BUT--
I'D LIKE TO KEEP IT-- FOR REFERENCE.
GIVE ME FORTY-EIGHT HOURS, GENTLEMEN. I'LL GET THE PROPERTY FOR YOU.
WE HAVE JUST BARELY THAT, MISS CROFT.
THANK YOU.
I AM FAIRLY CERTAIN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS IS ALL I'M GOING TO NEED.

THAT, ABOUT FOUR HOURS OF STUDY AT THE LIBRARY ON ANCIENT RELIGIONS, AND MY NEW TRUSTY BOW AND ARROW.
SECRETS
ANCIENT RELICS
SO, NOW I GET TO LET FLY.
SODOM AND GOMORRAH. THAT WOULD BE THE FIND OF A LIFE TIME FOR SOME PEOPLE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE SOME BLOKE WOULD BE SO STUPID AS TO BUILD CONDOMINIUMS THERE.

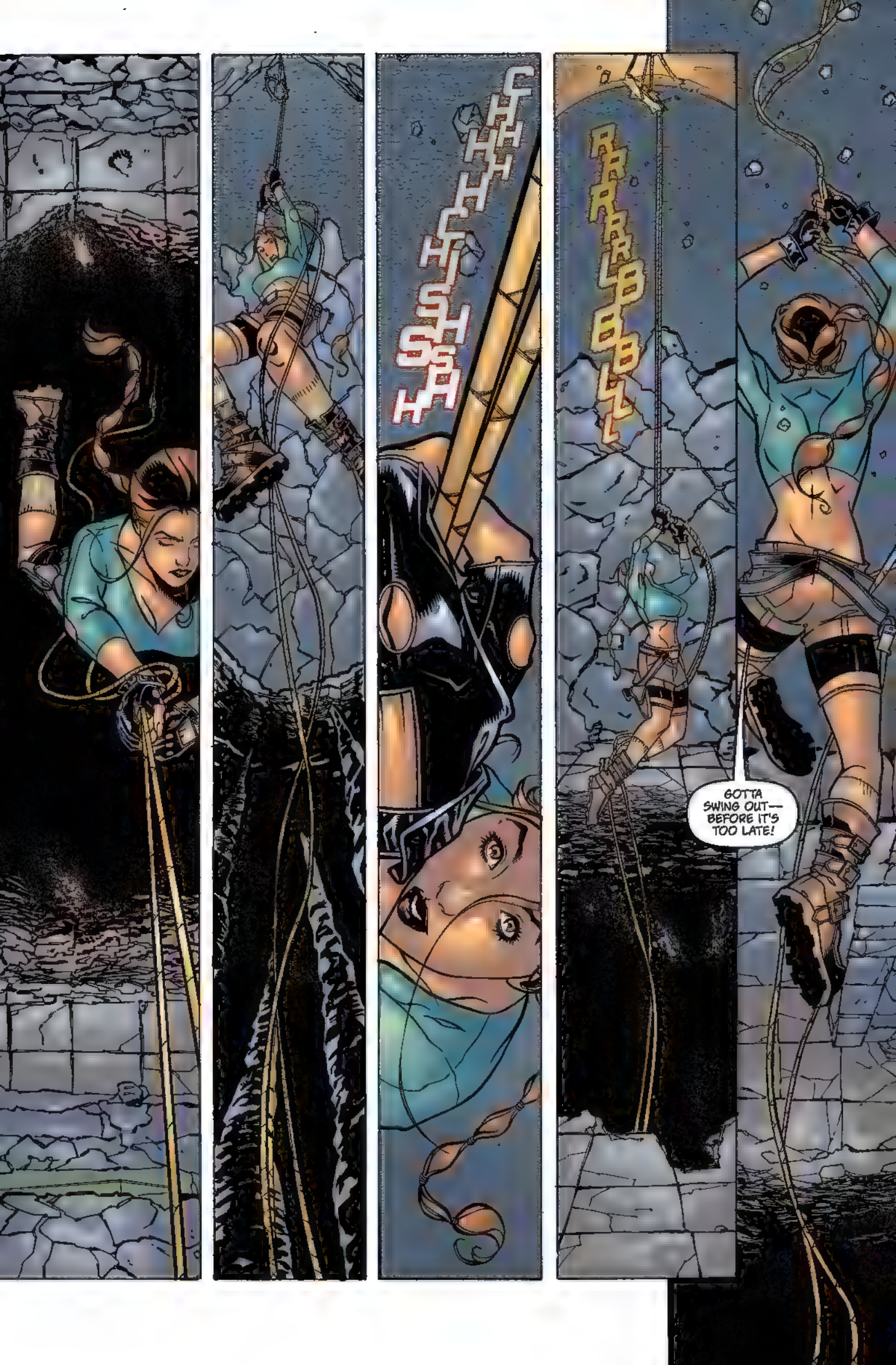
I HIRED A LOCAL GUIDE TO TAKE ME OUT TO THE SITE. I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE IN FINDING IT ALONE.
MISS IS SURE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HERE? I DON'T WANNA GET SHOT.
SOLD
SITE OF
SELAH
IT'S PERFECTLY REASONABLE TO BE HERE AT THIS HOUR.
...OR GET IMPRISONED.
IT SHOULD BE JUST ABOUT HERE.
WHAT SHOULD BE?
THE PLACE WHERE I TELL YOU TO LEAVE ME HERE ALONE.
OH NO--- NO NO NO NO—
LISTEN TO ME.
WHATEVER YOU DO..
WHATEVER YOU HEAR,
WHATEVER YOU SMELL,
DO NOT STOP RUNNING FROM HERE, DO NOT LOOK BACK ON THIS ANCIENT RUIN, AND NEVER COME BACK HERE.
YES, MISS!


I DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME TO DO MY HOMEWORK ON THIS PLACE.
BECAUSE I ONLY HAVE FORTY-EIGHT HOURS TO DO MY THING.
I MEAN, IT'S REALLY IRONIC, WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO.
BECAUSE ON ANY OTHER GIVEN TOMB RAID, I'D NEVER BE THIS STUPID.
BUT TONIGHT, THE RULES ARE ABOUT TO CHANGE. IT'S GONNA BE RISKY, BUT IT'LL BE WORTH IT IN THE END.

ABOUT FIFTY-THREE MINUTES AND SOME HMMING LATER, I FIND MYSELF IN JUST ABOUT THE RIGHT PLACE FOR MY MISSION.
SHOULD BE JUST UP HERE--
RIGHT! I'M SO GOOD. THE TALISMAN OF THE SUN GOD STILL PERFECTLY INTACT.

NOW, NORMALLY, I'D SCRUTINIZE THIS VAULT FOR TRAPS.
BECAUSE BELIEVE ME, IT WAS TOO EASY TO GET HERE WHICH MEANS THERE'S ONE HELL OF A NASTY TRAP WAITING FOR WHOEVER WANTS TO TAKE THAT PIECE OF GOLD TALISMAN OFF THE CEILING.

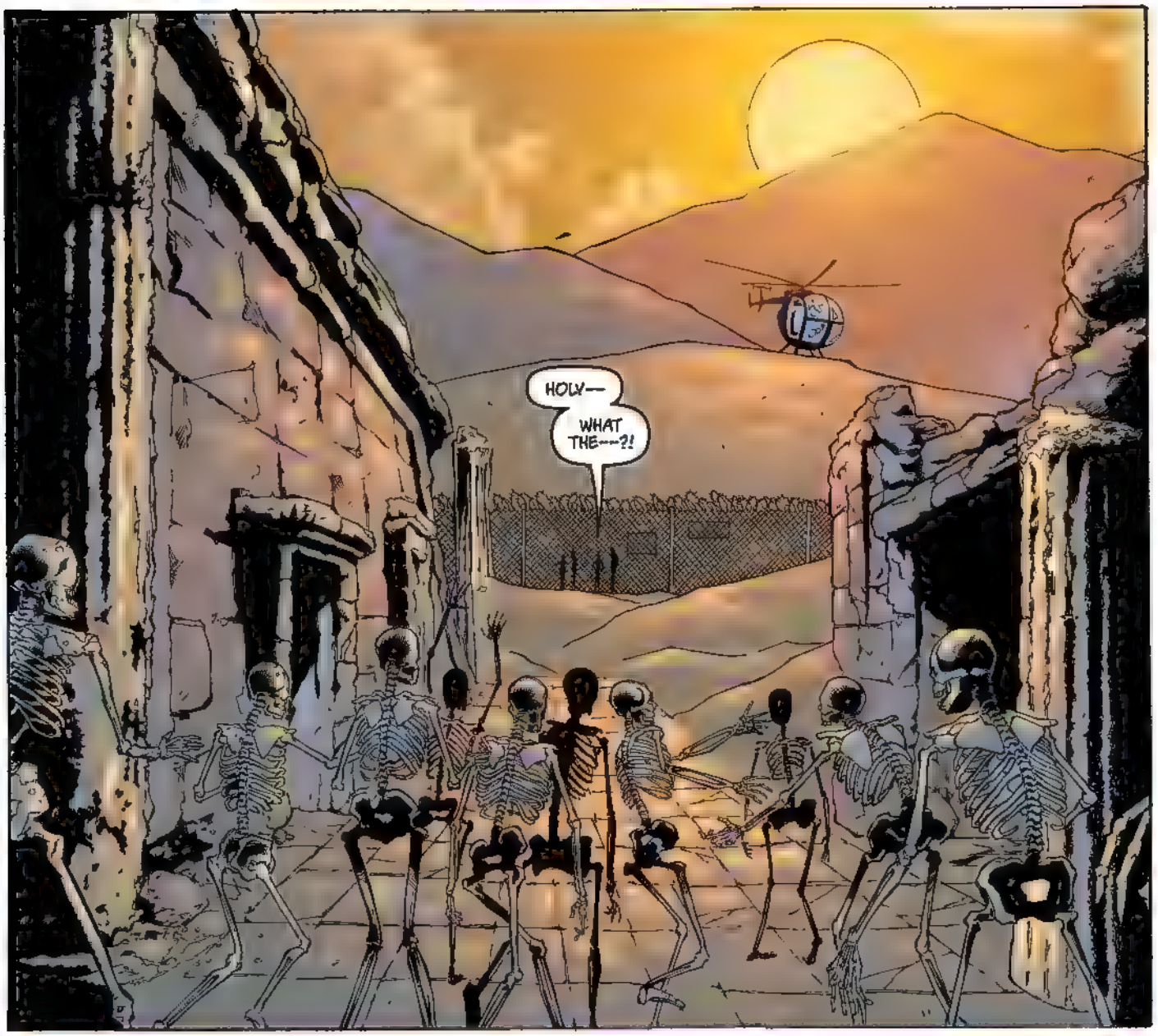
LET'S PRETEND I'M NOT EXTREMELY NERVOUS ABOUT WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN I—
YANK THIS TALISMAN OFF THE CEILING!
7
CRRRACK!!
UH OH.

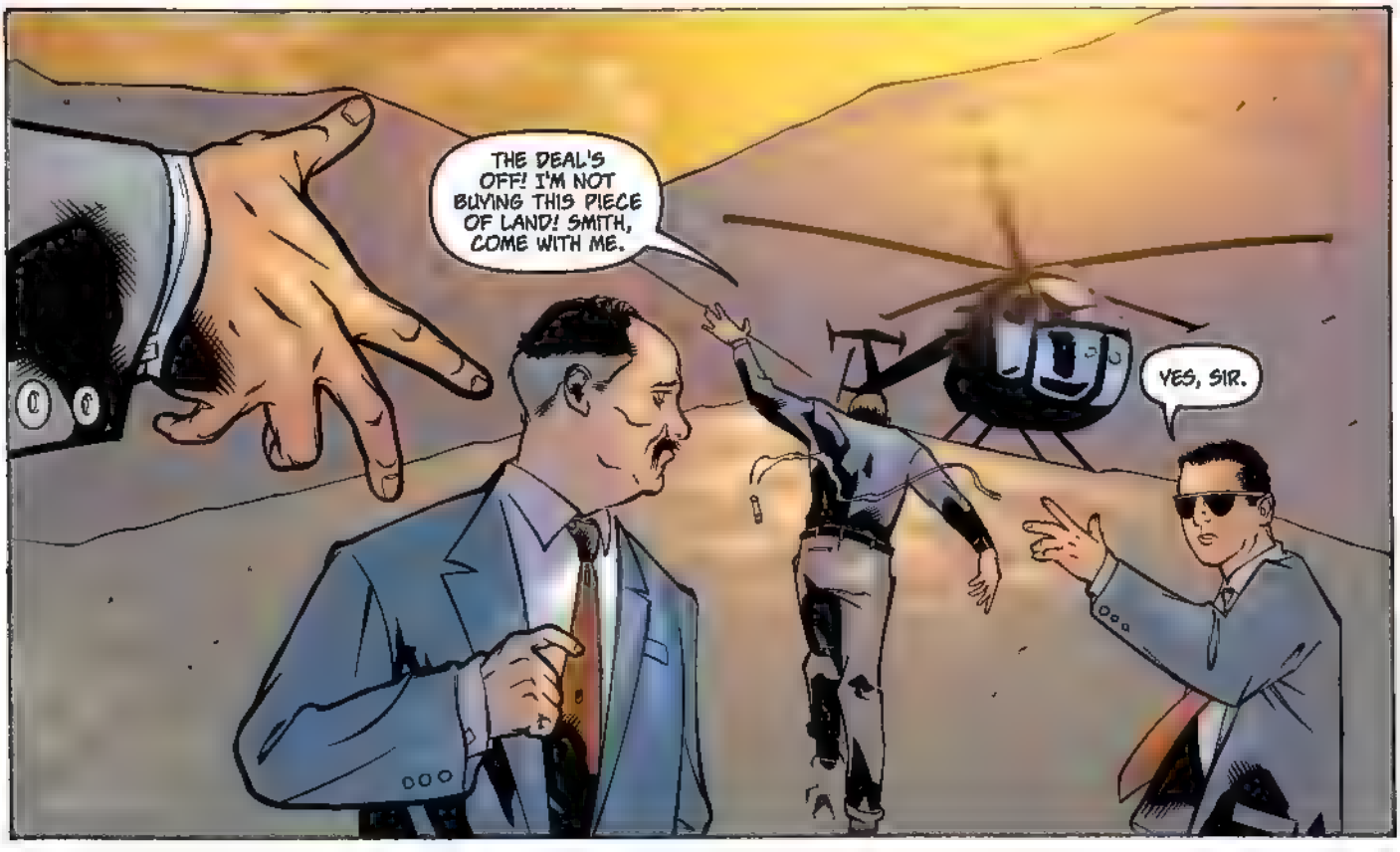

CHHHHCHISHSSHH
RRRRRLBBBLLL
GOTTA SWING OUT— BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

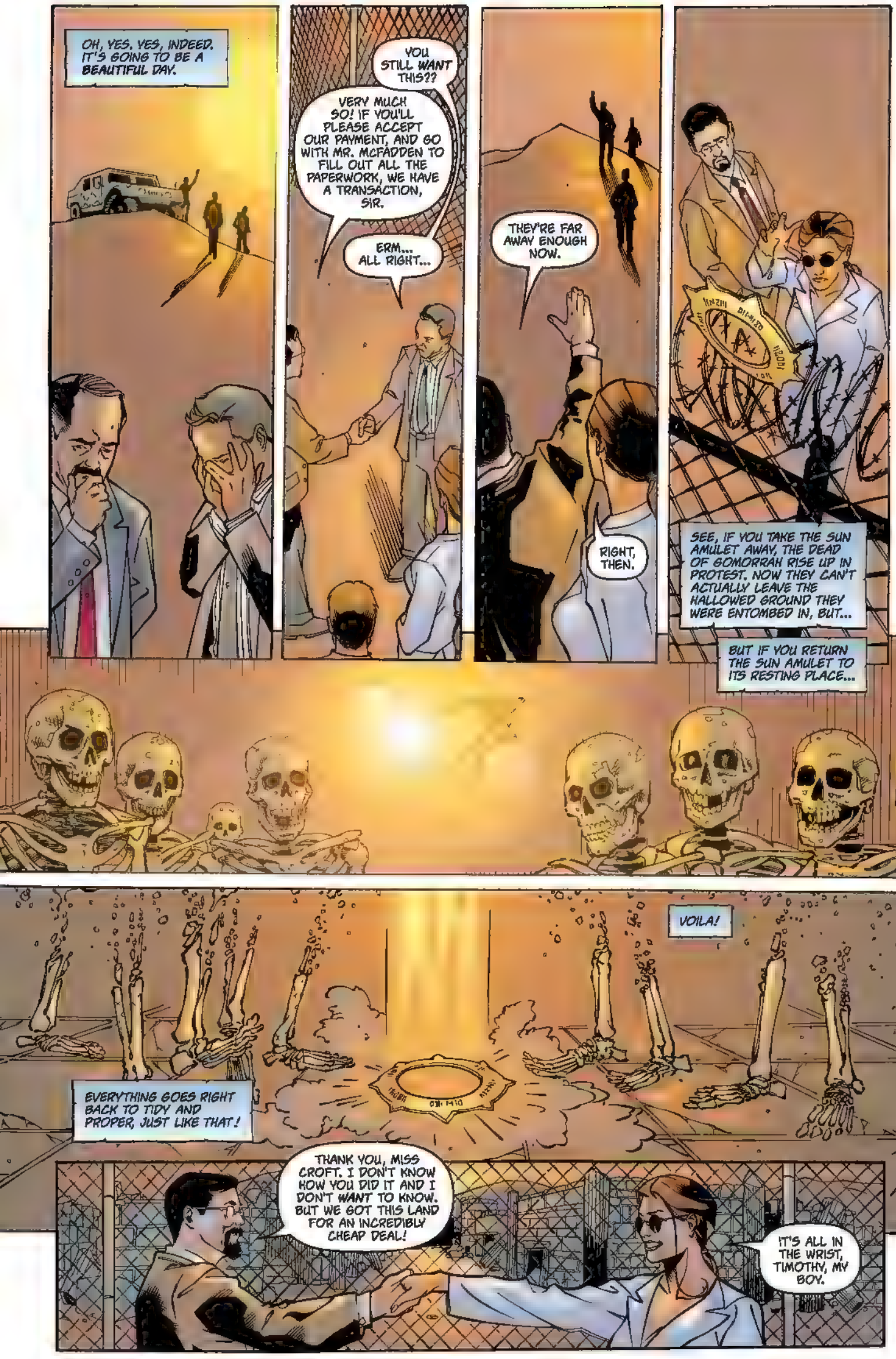
NNNNNNGAH!
NNNNNNNNGAH!
ALL RIGHT, I DIDN'T SAY THAT TWICE!
CREEEEAK
GROAAAAANSHHHH
SIIIIGH
OH BLOODY HELL! I SEE I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE GETTING OUT OF A TIGHT SPOT IN HERE.

HERE COMES THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE!
SHHRRIEEEEK!
GRAAAAUGH!
PERHAPS THESE FRIENDLY, REEKING DENIZENS CAN HELP WITH THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY TOMORROW MORNING.
HISSSSSS!

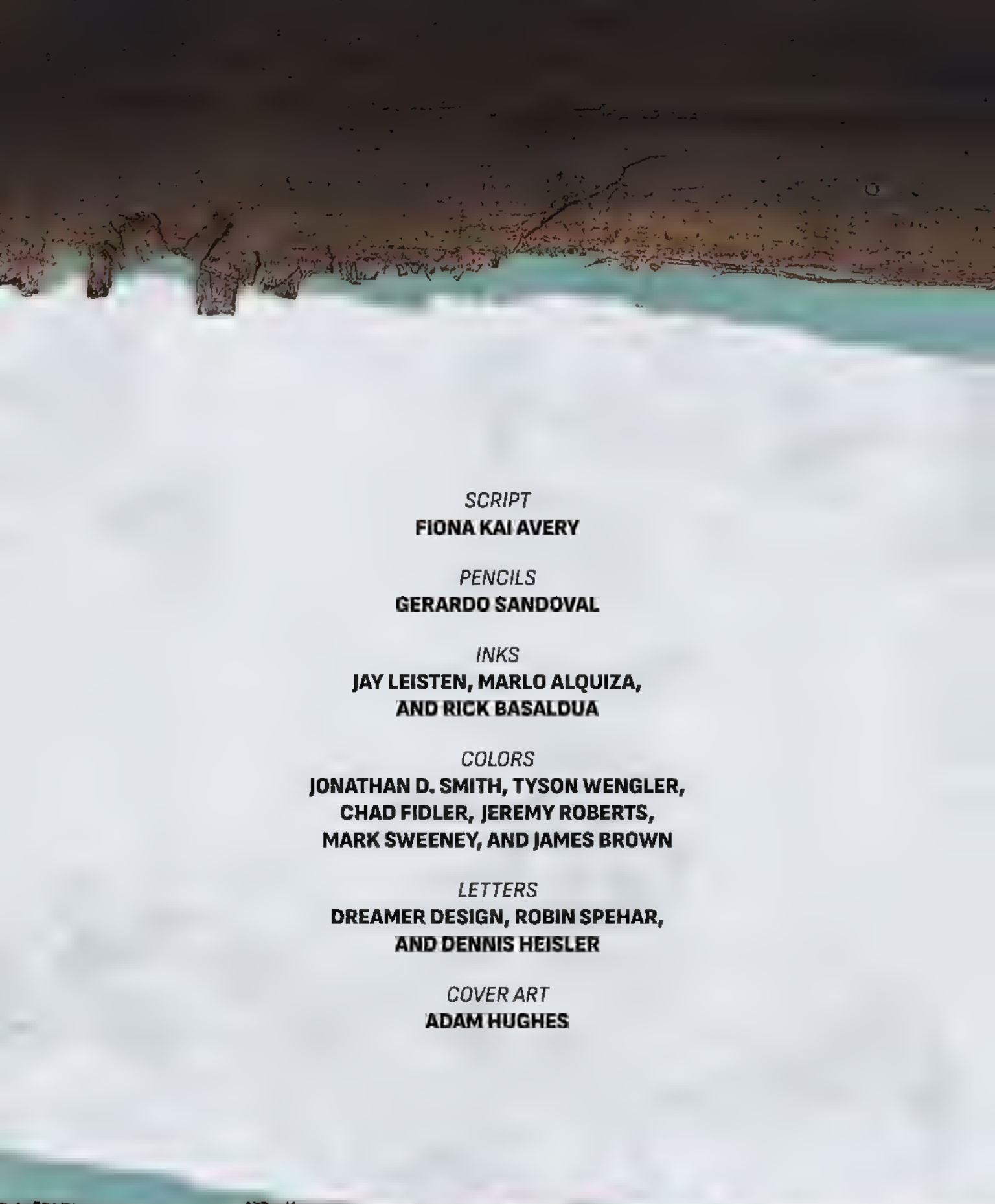
DAWN BREAKS IN THE BEAUTIFUL VALLEY OF GOMORRAH.
SOLD
FOR
A NEW DAY FILLED WITH POSSIBILITIES.
GOOD MORNING, GENTLEMEN!
ERM...UM... UH...
MR. KAGAN, UM...UH... ABOUT THE...
WHAT IS IT? SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PROPERTY? MY ACCOUNT FUNDS?
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED, MR. KAGAN.


HOLY—
WHAT THE—?!


THE DEAL'S OFF! I'M NOT BUYING THIS PIECE OF LAND! SMITH, COME WITH ME.
YES, SIR.


OH, YES. YES, INDEED. IT'S GOING TO BE A BEAUTIFUL DAY.
YOU STILL WANT THIS??
VERY MUCH SO! IF YOU'LL PLEASE ACCEPT OUR PAYMENT, AND GO WITH MR. MCFADDEN TO FILL OUT ALL THE PAPERWORK, WE HAVE A TRANSACTION, SIR.
ERM... ALL RIGHT...
THEY'RE FAR AWAY ENOUGH NOW.
RIGHT, THEN.
SEE, IF YOU TAKE THE SUN AMULET AWAY, THE DEAD OF GOMORRAH RISE UP IN PROTEST. NOW THEY CAN'T ACTUALLY LEAVE THE HALLOWED GROUND THEY WERE ENTOMBED IN, BUT...
BUT IF YOU RETURN THE SUN AMULET TO ITS RESTING PLACE...
VOILA!
EVERYTHING GOES RIGHT BACK TO TIDY AND PROPER, JUST LIKE THAT!
THANK YOU, MISS CROFT. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT AND I DON'T WANT TO KNOW. BUT WE GOT THIS LAND FOR AN INCREDIBLY CHEAP DEAL!
IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST, TIMOTHY, MY BOY.

MR. KAGAN, I'M TERRIBLY SORRY ABOUT THE--- I MEAN...
I KNOW YOU WEREN'T GOING TO BUILD CONDOS THERE, I THOUGHT IT WAS A GREAT IDEA. MAKING PEOPLE THINK YOU WERE DOING ONE THING WHEN YOU WERE AFTER THE SUN AMULET, NOT DEVELOPMENT.
AND I REALIZE HOW MUCH CLAIMING THE SITE WOULD HAVE MEANT TO YOU.
IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT MCFADDEN HIRED SOMEONE TO PILFER THE SUN AMULET, WHICH MADE GOMORRAH USELESS TO ME.
BUT WHO?
I'D LIKE YOU TO LOOK UP A MISS LARA CROFT FOR ME.
YES, SIR.
I HAVE A FEELING WE NEED TO MEET.
AND GET TO THE HEART OF A FEW MATTERS.
I SWEAR I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GET A BULLSEYE EVERY TIME, SIR.
IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST, SMITH.
-3-
Avery Johnson Kelsten & Smith



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MR. KAGAN? I HAVE INFORMATION ON LARA CROFT. WORD IS SHE'S GOING TO INVESTIGATE THE CHARIOT BURIAL DISCOVERY.
WHY? YOU'VE SEEN ONE CHARIOT BURIAL, YOU'VE SEEN THEM ALL. SHE'S MAKING SOME GOODWILL APPEARANCE?
THERE'VE BEEN SOME NEW DEVELOPMENTS. THAT AND THE MINEFIELD MAKE IT QUITE INTRIGUING. THEY'VE CALLED IN LARA AS REINFORCEMENT.
SHE'S GOING THROUGH THOSE MINEFIELDS? FOR A SIMPLE CHARIOT BURIAL? THERE ARE OTHER WAYS-- A SWAMP IS NOT FUN TO CROSS BUT-- OVER A MINEFIELD, I'D CHOOSE THAT ANY DAY.
TOMB
CERTAINLY, SIR.
THEN IT MUST NOT BE A SIMPLE CHARIOT BURIAL. SOMETHING IS THERE. SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
AND PROBABLY WORTH THE HASSLE OF MINES, OR SWAMPS, IF I CAN GET MY HANDS ON IT FIRST.

MISS CROFT!

MISTER CHIPPING! HOW ARE YOU?
YOU HAVE NOT BEEN AROUND THE ATHENS CLUB IN SOME TIME. I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK WE BORED YOU.
THIS WAS MY FATHER'S FAVORITE STOMPING GROUNDS. WHY EVER WOULD IT BORE ME?
TIMOTHY, YOU'RE A DARLING.
MAY I?
OH NO, THANK YOU. I'D LIKE TO LIVE FOREVER.
I THINK YOU WILL, MISS CROFT.
WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO NOW?
AN ANCIENT SITE CALLED LAMBAESIS, NUMIDIA.
ISN'T THAT IN PRESENT-DAY ALGERIA?
YES, AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT IS.
ALGERIA. THAT'S A PLUNGE!
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS IN ALGERIA?
DEAD THINGS, OF COURSE.
SHE BOT YOU AGAIN, OLD FRIEND.
THE ONE AND ONLY TIME I MADE FUN OF HER PROFESSION. I DIDN'T KNOW CALLING IT "SCAVENGING FOR DEAD THINGS," WOULD BE GOODBYE TO THE WOMAN I LOVE.
OH, MISTER CHIPPING. WE ALL LOVE HER. THAT'S THE GREAT IRONY, ISN'T IT?
COME ON.

ONE WEEK LATER: ON THE DANGEROUS SIDE OF THE CHARIOT BURIAL...
THIS WAY NOT GOOD FOR ENGLISHWOMAN. I TAKE YOU TO OTHER WAY. WE SEE OTHER ROUTE. OKAY?
NO.
WE'RE GOING THROUGH THE MINES. AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME PLACE TRAIL MARKERS.
WHY DO YOU NOT TAKE ALTERNATE ROUTE? IT IS SAFER!
THE FIRST GUIDE TOOK ME TO THE EDGE OF THE OTHER ROUTE.
IT'S A SWAMP.
SWAMP, IT IS SAFER THAN MINEFIELD, IT IS GOOD!
IT HAS LEECHES. THE FIRST GUIDE WAS COVERED IN THEM AFTER WALKING MY BOAT THROUGH THE REEDS.

LEECHES ARE BETTER THAN MINES, YES?
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU...
BUT I'VE ALWAYS HAD AN AVERSION TO CREATURES WHICH MAKE A LIVING FROM SUCKING OFF OTHERS. I'D TAKE A MINEFIELD OVER A LEECH ANY DAY, MY GOOD FELLOW.

AND OF COURSE: ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BURIAL...
WHICH WAY, BOSS?
WE TAKE THE SWAMP ROUTE. GET THE BOATS READY.
I RATHER ENJOY BOATING.
ALWAYS HAVE.
WHAT'S THE PLAN, ONCE WE GET THERE?
I INTEND TO MAKE MY INTRODUCTION TO MISS CROFT, OF COURSE. THE REST DEPENDS ON HOW THAT GOES.
LEECHES! AUGH!
REALLY, BRYSON. IT'S A TRIVIAL PROBLEM. AND I HEAR IT'S GOOD FOR THE HUMORS. LET'S PUSH ON.

BLLEEEEEEAT!
OH, NO.
HE MUST HAVE BEEN LOST.
LET'S GO, PLEASE. HURRY!
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF LEAVING HIM OUT HERE AMONGST THE MINES.
MARK MY PATH, PLEASE.
:GRUMBLE MUTTERGRUMP!:
BLLEEEEEEAT!
OH DEAR.
IT SEEMS HE'S IN A LITTLE BIT OF A MUDDLE. THERE'S A MINE BETWEEN HIS LEGS.
THIS IS CRAZY--- WE GO NOW! YES?
BLLEEEEEEAT!
FWOOSH
OOF!

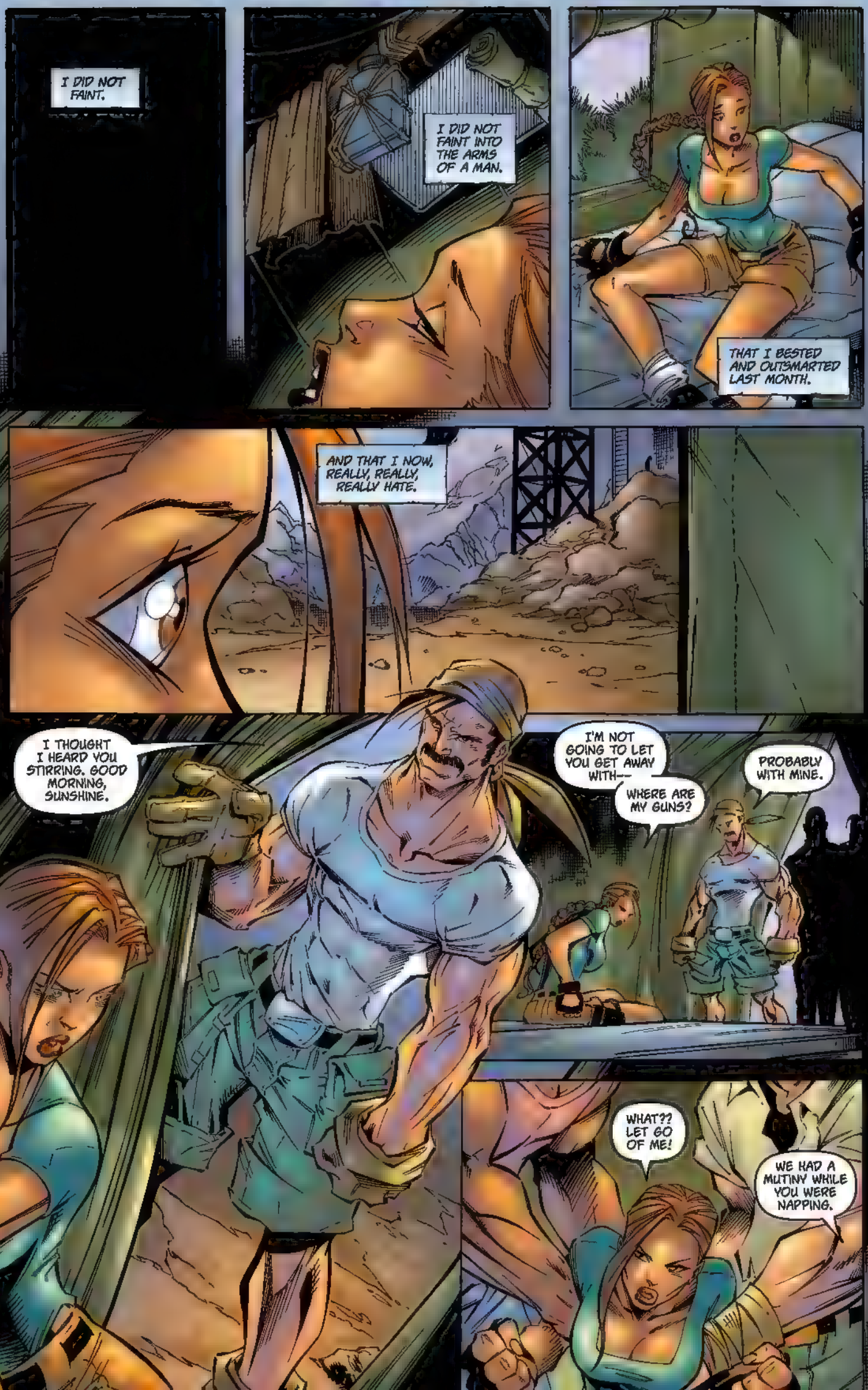
BLLEEEEEAT!
BWAHAHAHAHA HAHAHAHAH!
LET'S GO.
BLAM! BLAM BLAM!
WHIZZ
BLAM!
WHAT IN BLOODY HELL?? STAY DOWN!
BLAM! BLAM!
AAAAH! I'M NOT STAYING!
WSHHHOOO
BOOM!
BLLEEEEEAT!
AUGH!
HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE FAST!
ARGH!

DON'T WANNA HIT ANYONE, BUT NEED TO MAKE IT CLEAR I AM NOT TARGET PRACTICE!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM! BLAM!
WHAT THE HELL DO THEY WANT ANYWAY??
BLEEEEEEEEAT!
NOT NOW, LITTLE ONE--
PLEASE DON'T MOVE, MISS CROFT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, BOYS, I'VE GOT THE INTRUDER SETTLED DOWN NOW.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

I HAVE NOTHING HERE YOU WANT. SO LEAVE. NOW.
YOU MUST BE THE AMAZING LARA CROFT. MY PRESENCE HERE IS VERY SIMPLE, REALLY.
MY BROTHERS AND I LOOK FOR ANY SITE OF VALUE IN THE WORLD. SITES WHERE WE MIGHT ACQUIRE RARE BEAUTIES AND LOST TREASURE.
YOU...
I'VE SEEN YOU SOMEWHERE BEFORE. THAT VOICE, I KNOW IT.

PERHAPS YOU REMEMBER MY FACE, FROM WHEN YOU STOLE THE SITE OF GOMORRAH FROM ME, LAST MONTH.
OH, YOU'RE MR. KAGAN?
SO YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING REAL ESTATE FOR CONDOMINIUMS AT ALL, ARE YOU?
NOT EXACTLY, NO.
SO YOU'RE A LOOTER, A THIEF... A... A PIRATE.
PIRATE, THEN...
MISS CROFT? ARE YOU...

...ALL RIGHT?
MISS CROFT! LARA!
WE NEED TO GET HER INTO THE SHADE.
BOYS?...
WE DON'T WORK FOR YOU ANYMORE.
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
THIS IS A MUTINY, KAGAN.


I DID NOT FAINT.
I DID NOT FAINT INTO THE ARMS OF A MAN.
THAT I BESTED AND OUTSMARTED LAST MONTH.
AND THAT I NOW, REALLY, REALLY, REALLY HATE.
I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU STIRRING. GOOD MORNING, SUNSHINE.
I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU GET AWAY WITH—
WHERE ARE MY GUNS?
PROBABLY WITH MINE.
WHAT?? LET GO OF ME!
WE HAD A MUTINY WHILE YOU WERE NAPPING.

YOU DON'T REMEMBER, DO YOU?
REMEMBER WHAT?
THE BONNY RAIDER, LITTLE JACK, JUDE, AND THE DORA DEL SOL!
DEAR MISS CROFT, YOU'RE RAVING.
I AM NOT RAVING!
I THINK THE MORE PRESSING CONCERN I HAVE IS WHAT THESE MEN PLAN TO DO WITH US NOW THAT WE'RE DISARMED.
IT'S SIMPLE. WE'RE GONNA USE YOU AND THEN BLOW YOU AWAY.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
KAGAN! GET OUT THERE AND DIG IT UP. NOW. YOU KNOW HOW.

YOU CAN'T WIN AGAINST BLACK MARKETEERS ALONE. WE'LL WORK TOGETHER.
LIKE HELL I WILL!
YOU'LL DO WHAT WE WANT. WE'VE GOT THE FIREPOWER HERE. NOW START DIGGING!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW? *YOUR GREED* HAS PUT US BOTH IN DANGER. WE HAVE NO WEAPONS, WE HAVE NO OUTSIDE HELP— WE'RE STUCK IN HELL WITH IDIOTS WHO HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO TAKE SOIL SAMPLES!
I THINK YOU LIKE ME, MISS CROFT. WHAT A DELIGHT.
LOOK AT THIS! TELL US WHAT IT SAYS.

A.D. SECOND CENTURY. EXCELLENT CONDITION.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT! WILL IT FETCH A GREAT PRICE?!
THIS, TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, WOULD BE THE FEMININE PRONOUN "HER."
e-X?
THAT WOULDN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.
PRECISELY. IT'S A CALLIGRAPHY ERROR, PERHAPS?
NO, ANY CORRECTIONS WOULD MEAN STARTING THE FUNERARY VESSELS OVER FROM SCRATCH.
RIGHT, YES. WE WOULD HAVE FOUND THIS IN THE TELL, NOT THE BURIAL.
THIS CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING.
IT CAN'T BE.
WELL, IT COULD BE. THERE'S NO GOOD REASON WHY IT COULDN'T BE.
BUT IT'S SUCH A REMOTE CHANCE, A REMOTE POSSIBILITY THAT...

THE FIRST PARTY HERE DIDN'T GET VERY FAR, JUST FOUND ONE OF THE GOLDEN WHEELS JUTTING OUT OF THE GROUND. ENOUGH TO TELL THEM IT WAS A CHARIOT BURIAL.
NORTH... SO THAT'S EAST...
WE NEED A GRID MARKER. DO YOU HAVE TWINE? STAKES? LET'S DO IT RIGHT OR DIE TRYING.
RIGHT THEN.
LISTEN HERE. THIS IS TAKING TOO MUCH TIME AND—
WOULD YOU JUST SHUT UP?
DID YOU JUST SAY WHAT I THINK YOU SAID?
ARE YOU GOING TO USE THAT GUN? THEN USE IT. THAT SEEMS TO BE ALL YOU'RE GOOD AT.
OTHERWISE, SIT BACK, SHUT UP AND LET THE PROFES-SIONALS EARN YOU SOME BLACK MARKET OBJECTS.
LET'S GO.
RIGHT.

FIRST WE MAKE A GRID, BEFORE WE TOUCH ANYTHING.
AND I'D BETTER MAKE IT LARGE, TOO. IF THEY BURIED HORSES, WE'RE GONNA NEED A LOT OF ROOM.
YES, MOST DEFINITELY, A LOT OF ARTIFACTS THAT MENTION "HER" IN THEM.
CAN YOU IMAGINE OXFORD'S REACTION IF WE'RE ACTUALLY...
ON TO SOMETHING THIS NOUVEAU, IT WOULD TURN THE ENTIRE TIMETABLE UPSIDE-DOWN.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT PROFESSOR BENDERSMITH WOULD SAY.
I DO. SOMETHING VERY DRY, VERY ARCHAIC, AND QUITE BESIDE THE POINT.

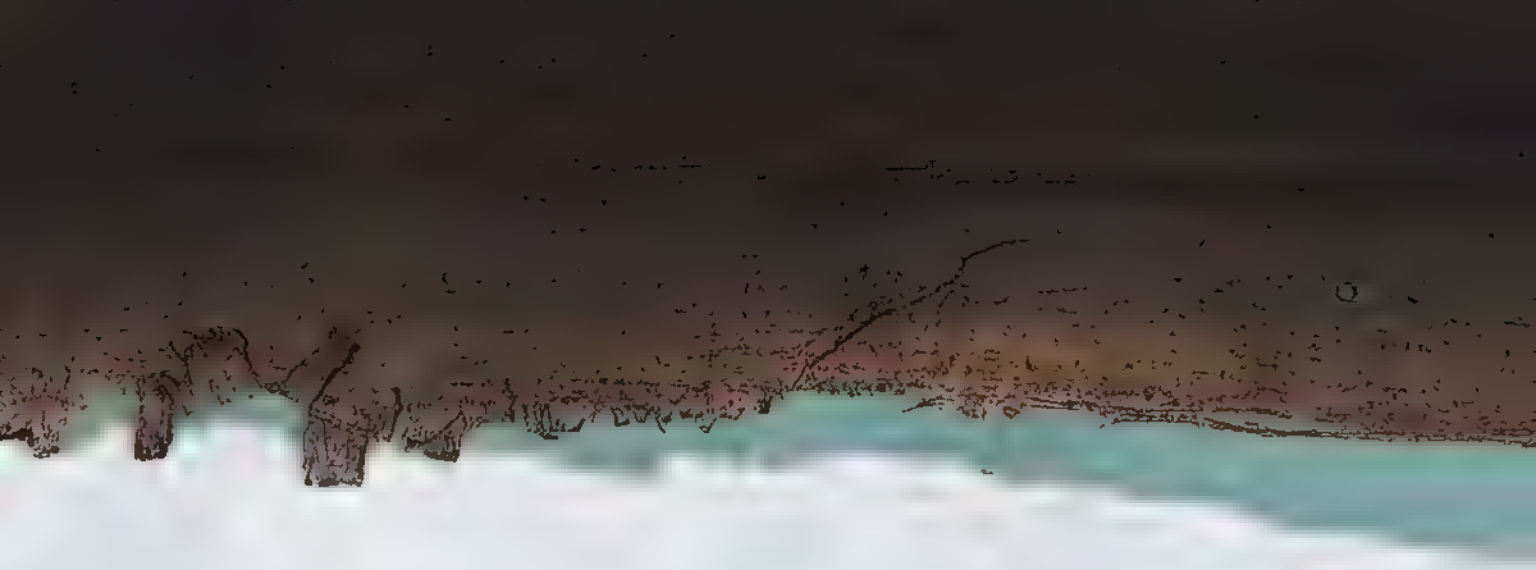
IT'S A WOMAN.

HERE RESTS THE BODY OF A GREAT WARRIOR QUEEN, KILLED IN BATTLE WHILE SAVING OUR LANDS FROM HORDES OF BARBARIANS.
MAY SHE CONTINUE TO FIGHT IN GOLDEN FIELDS, IN ELYSIUM, FOREVER.

IF WE WORK TOGETHER, THERE'S STILL A CHANCE TO GET THIS DIG BACK. I'LL GIVE YOU CREDIT ON THE MINEFIELD. AND MENTION YOU WERE PRESENT FOR MY DISCOVERY.
MY, WHAT A GENTLEMAN. BUT I'VE COME TO EXPECT NOTHING LESS...
...FROM A PIRATE.
CONSIDER IT AN EVEN SCORE, MISS CROFT. IF YOU WON'T MEDDLE IN MY AFFAIRS, I WON'T MEDDLE IN YOURS.
YOU'RE STILL A PIRATE.
HOW ODD.
I HAVE THE STRANGEST FEELING. LIKE SOMEHOW, I'VE SAID THAT BEFORE.
NAH, IT'S NOT... POSSIBLE...
PRIVATEER... HUZZZZZZZ...
KAGAN?
KAGAN!

SEVERAL HOURS, DREAMS, AND DISCOVERIES LATER...
LARA...?
YES?
I MEANT WHAT I SAID. I'LL SHARE THE CREDIT WITH YOU ON THIS DIG.
THAT'S VERY REASSURING, COMING FROM A MAN WHO PROBABLY HAS NO INTENTION OF KEEPING HIS WORD.
THAT'S MY RIDE NOW.
YOU'RE GOING TO JUST LEAVE ME HERE?
I NOTIFIED THE POLICE. THEY SHOULD BE ALONG ANYTIME NOW. GIVE THEM AN EXTRA HOUR JUST TO GET THROUGH THE MINEFIELD, THOUGH.
IT WAS NICE WORKING WITH YOU. MAYBE WE CAN WORK TOGETHER UNDER BETTER CIRCUMSTANCES.
LARA CROFT DISCOVERS TRIBAL CHIEFTESS BURIAL.
FIRST WOMAN CHARIOT BURIAL EVER DISCOVERED.
With generous help from Mr. Kagan of Kagan Enterprises, today a burial was discovered outside of

REN



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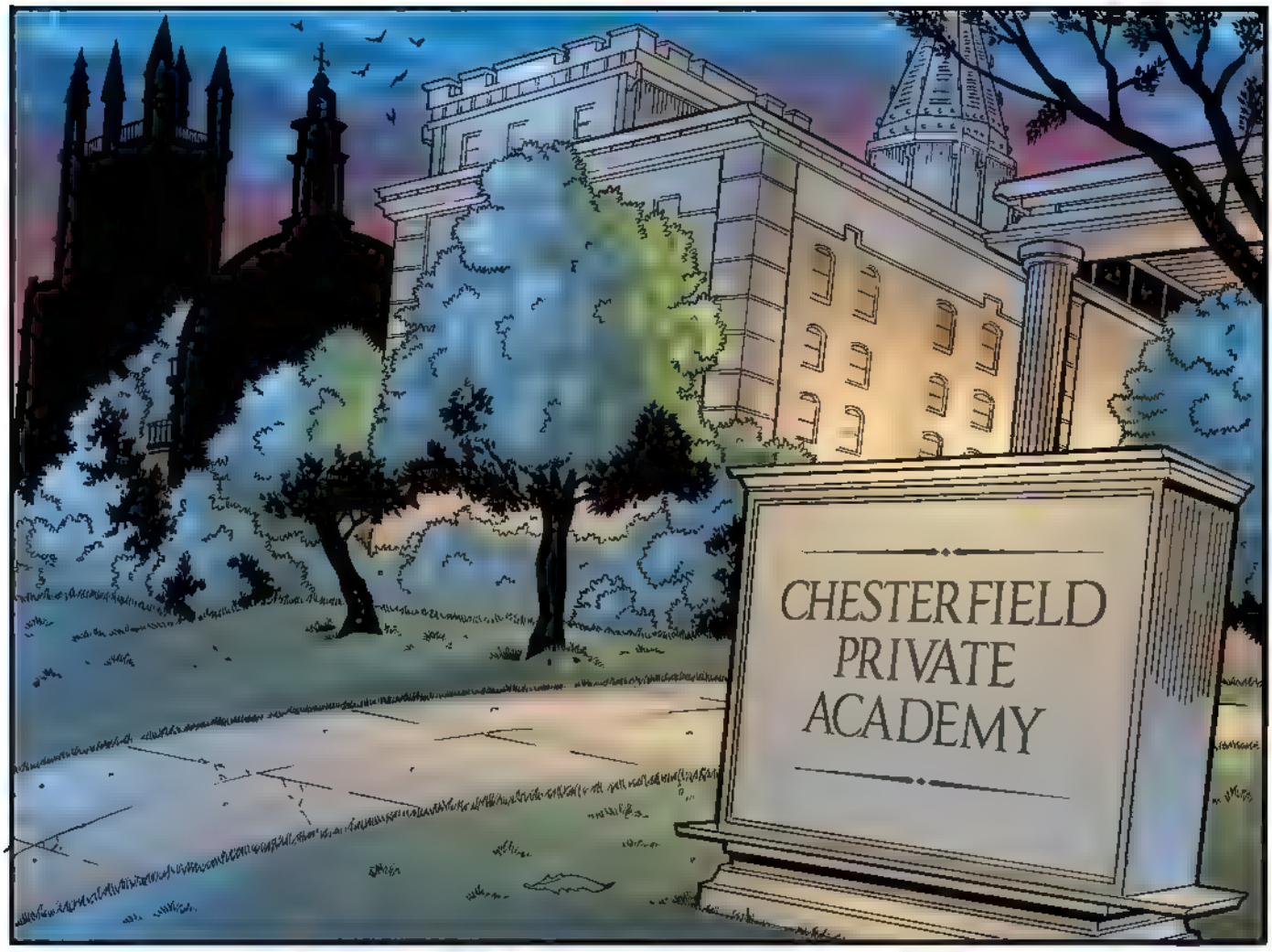
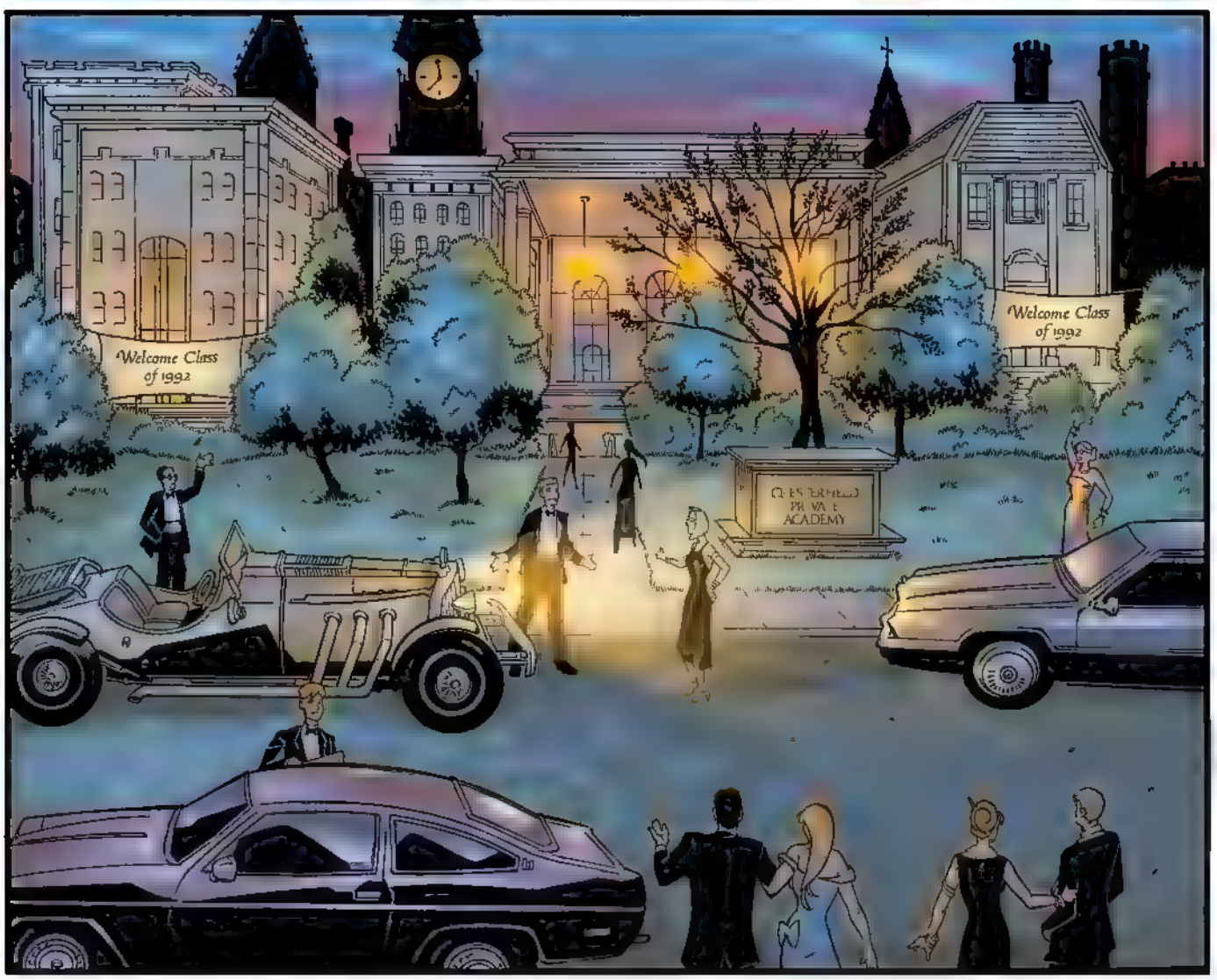
KEU CHA


CHESTERFIELD
PRIVATE
ACADEMY


Welcome Class
of 1992
Welcome Class
of 1992

"HE'S HERE! IT'S HIM!"
"IT'S THE PRIME MINISTER!"
"MR. PRIME MINISTER! MR. ADLER! TONY ADLER IS HERE!"
CHARLES FULLERTON!
NICE TO SEE YOU MR. PRIME MINISTER.
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I WAS ABLE TO CHAT WITH YOU. PERHAPS WE CAN REMEDY THAT TONIGHT.
I'D LIKE THAT.
MR. PRIME MINISTER! TONY!
CHARLENE! MY GOODNESS. IT TOOK A MOMENT FOR ME TO RECOGNIZE YOU. NOTHING LIKE THE BOOKWORM I REMEMBER.

GOOD LORD! IT'S TOBEY MCGUINNESS! LOOK AT YOU!
WHAT ABOUT ME, EH?
WHAT ON EARTH??—
LOOK OUT!
VRRRRROOOOOOM!
WHAT KIND OF PERSON WOULD—
LARA CROFT.
MADEMOISELLE!
MERCI BEAUCOUP!

RFT692K

LARA CROFT! I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE ABLE TO MAKE IT TONIGHT. I THOUGHT YOU WERE...
...ALWAYS GOING TO STAY SUCH A SWEET, INNOCENT QUIET LITTLE THING.
119
UNDERWENT A SLIGHT CHANGE OF PLANS.
HOW COULD YOU EXPECT ME TO MISS SOMETHING...
DOWN WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE DONE IN THE GOVERNMENT TODAY, ROIT!
...LIKE THIS?
BLOODY HELL, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU.
AND YOU!

MAY I WALK YOU TO THE CHAPELLE BUILDING?
WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?
I MEAN, I KNOW ALL ABOUT THE PRIME MINISTER SITUATION. AND BY THE WAY, MY CONDOLENCES ON PRIME MINISTER HAWTHORNE'S PASSING. I WAS TERRIBLY SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT THAT.
THANK YOU. AS YOU KNOW WHEN HE PASSED AWAY, I HAD TO TAKE OVER FROM DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER. I THINK THIS MAKES ME THE YOUNGEST PRIME MINISTER SINCE WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER IN 1783.
BUT YOU WERE SUCH A COMPLETE BRAT BACK IN SCHOOL. I NEVER DREAMED YOU'D BE ACTUALLY LEADING THE NATION ONE DAY.
WELL, I DID USE TO SAY "DOWN WITH THE GOVERNMENT THE WAY IT STANDS", DIDN'T I?
HMM, TRUE. SOMETHING MR. BOHANNON USED TO HATE.
MR. BOHANNON? IS HE COMING?
DIDN'T YOU HEAR? MR. BOHANNON PASSED AWAY LAST MONTH.
I HEARD THAT HE HAD SOMETHING TO GIVE YOU BEFORE HE DIED...

A FEW YEARS AGO, I SENT HIM A LETTER AND... A GIFT. I NEVER THOUGHT HE'D...

HOW VERY SAD.
OH NO!
OH MY GOD!
WHAT IN HEAVENS IS THAT?!
AAAAAH!
COME ON! SOMETHING'S WRONG!

THE ONE WHO CLAIMS MY TREASURE HAS COME.
STAND FORTH! SHOW YOURSELF AND WHAT YE SEEK.

OH NO. IT CAN'T BE!
LARA, NO, IT'S DANGEROUS!
WHAT IN THE--
BLOODY HELL IS--
HELLO!
HELLO!
GOING ON?!
LARA! YOU'VE GOT-- PIGTAILS! YOU LOOK LIKE A FRESHMAN AGAIN!
UNNNGH! NO WAY! I ALWAYS HATED THESE SKIRTS.
ROIT! DAMNED IF I PAID TOO MUCH TO HAVE THIS TATTOO REMOVED!!

YOU ARE THE RECIPIENT. YOU MUST BEST ME.
YOU'VE CAUGHT ME AT A BIT OF A DISADVANTAGE, SIR GLOWSALOT.
BUT NOT FOR LONG.
OH MY!
AAAAH!
WHAT'S SHE DOING??
LARA! WHAT ARE-- HOW COULD YOU--
IT'S ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE. STAY BACK. THIS WON'T BE LONG.
CRACK!
THIS WILL HAVE TO DO AS MY SWORD. AND AS FOR PROTECTIVE ARMOR, IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, THERE'S ENOUGH STARCH IN THESE UNIFORMS TO WITHSTAND THE BRUTE FORCE OF A JAVELIN LANCE.

LET'S GO!
THOU MUST TAKE THE CROWN FROM MINE OWN HANDS WITH YOURS. ONLY THEN WILL THIS DUEL BE OVER.
MR. BOHANNON...
I REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW...
VERY WELL. I ACCEPT.
HERE WE GO!

THIS KNIGHT MUST BE SOME KIND OF PROTECTIVE MEASURE SET IN MOTION BY THE CROWN ITSELF.
I REMEMBER LOOKING FOR THE CROWN OF KING ARTHUR.
WHICH I THEN GAVE TO MY FORMER TEACHER, MR. BOHANNON.
WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE INSTEAD OF HIM!
ALAS, IT SEEMS YOU ARE FAILING.
JUST GETTING WARMED UP.

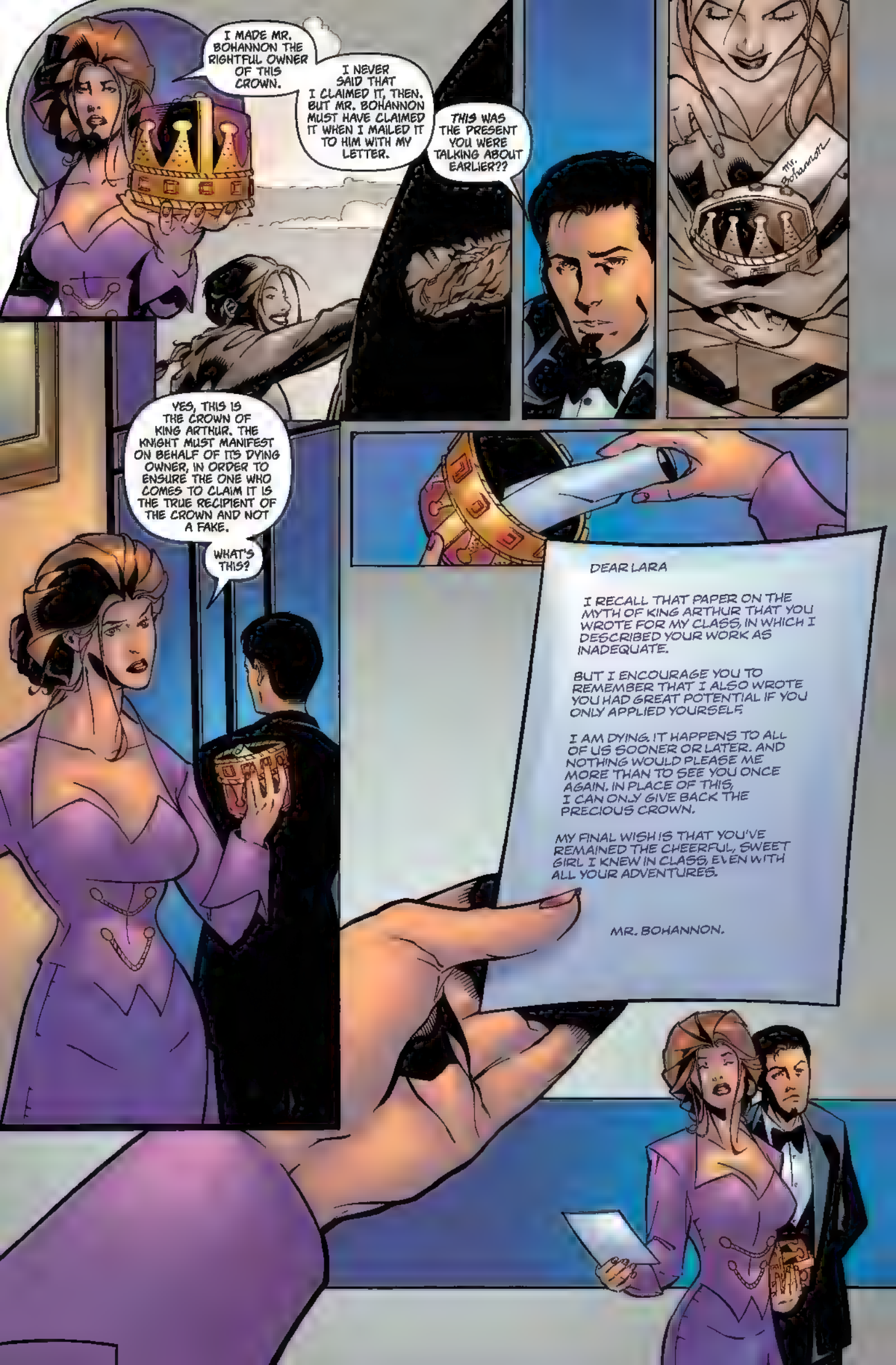
ORIGINALLY THE CROWN WAS PROTECTED BY KING ARTHUR HIMSELF---
LOOK OUT, LARA!
NNGH!
HAAAAAAAAA!
KLANG.
CRACK!

HAVE I MENTIONED I'M POORLY EQUIPPED, LATELY?
AGAIN! HAAAAA!
HAAAAAAAAA!
CLAAAANG!!
WELCOME HOME
SS OF '92
ON THIS NEXT PASS I'LL—
KSHHHHHT!
FINISH... HIM...

WELCOME HOME
CLASS OF '92

I ACCEPT THIS CROWN ON BEHALF OF ITS OWNER.
MAY IT PROTECT THEE UNTIL THE END OF DAYS...
ANSWER MY QUESTION. WHY ARE YOU HERE NOW?
I WAS MADE TO ETERNALLY PROTECT THE CROWN OF KING ARTHUR. WHENEVER IT IS BEQUEATHED TO SOMEONE NEW BY ITS CURRENT OWNER, I MANIFEST ACCORDING TO THE DYING OWNER'S FINAL WISH...

FINAL WISH... FINAL...HMM...
IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT? ANYONE INJURED?
WELL THAT WAS CERTAINLY AN ADVENTURE. I DIDN'T RECALL IT BEING PART OF THE REUNION PROGRAM.
WHAT WAS THAT? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? TO EVERYONE— TO ME...
WE ALL BECAME YOUNG AGAIN. JUST LIKE IN SCHOOL.
I THINK I HAVE A HUNCH...


I MADE MR. BOHANNON THE RIGHTFUL OWNER OF THIS CROWN.
I NEVER SAID THAT I CLAIMED IT, THEN. BUT MR. BOHANNON MUST HAVE CLAIMED IT WHEN I MAILED IT TO HIM WITH MY LETTER.
THIS WAS THE PRESENT YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT EARLIER??
Mr. Bohannon
YES, THIS IS THE CROWN OF KING ARTHUR. THE KNIGHT MUST MANIFEST ON BEHALF OF ITS DYING OWNER, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE ONE WHO COMES TO CLAIM IT IS THE TRUE RECIPIENT OF THE CROWN AND NOT A FAKE.
WHAT'S THIS?
DEAR LARA
I RECALL THAT PAPER ON THE MYTH OF KING ARTHUR THAT YOU WROTE FOR MY CLASS, IN WHICH I DESCRIBED YOUR WORK AS INADEQUATE.
BUT I ENCOURAGE YOU TO REMEMBER THAT I ALSO WROTE YOU HAD GREAT POTENTIAL IF YOU ONLY APPLIED YOURSELF.
I AM DYING. IT HAPPENS TO ALL OF US SOONER OR LATER. AND NOTHING WOULD PLEASE ME MORE THAN TO SEE YOU ONCE AGAIN. IN PLACE OF THIS, I CAN ONLY GIVE BACK THE PRECIOUS CROWN.
MY FINAL WISH IS THAT YOU'VE REMAINED THE CHEERFUL, SWEET GIRL I KNEW IN CLASS, EVEN WITH ALL YOUR ADVENTURES.
MR. BOHANNON.

HIS FINAL WISH.
OF COURSE, THAT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING.
IT DOES?
HIS FINAL WISH WAS THAT HE COULD SEE ME ONCE AGAIN... AS THE CHEERFUL, SWEET GIRL HE REMEMBERED. AND THE KNIGHT SAID HE GRANTS THE FINAL WISHES OF ITS DYING OWNER.
SO WHEN I STEPPED INTO THIS ROOM AND CLAIMED THE CROWN, I BECAME — WE ALL BECAME — MR. BOHANNON'S FINAL WISH.
I HOPE SOMEHOW, SOMEWHERE... YOU GOT THAT GLIMPSE, MR. BOHANNON.

IT WAS NICE TO SEE ALL OF YOU AGAIN.
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR-- WELL-- WHATEVER IT WAS YOU DID THIS EVENING!
NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL.
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU. I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING IMPORTANT. IF YOU HAVE ANOTHER HOUR, AND DON'T MIND...
I HAVE AN ASSIGNMENT FOR YOU, LARA.
YOU DON'T SAY. A GOVERNMENT ASSIGNMENT?
ROIT!
HAHAHAHA!
TONY...
MAY I?
I THOUGHT YOU LEFT A FEW HOURS AGO.
TO BE CONTINUED.

LANSING• LEISTEN

SCRIPT
FIONA KAI AVERY

PENCILS
CARLOS MOTA AND MANNY CLARK

INKS
MARLOS ALQUIZA AND FABIO LAGUNA

COLORS
TYSON WENGLER

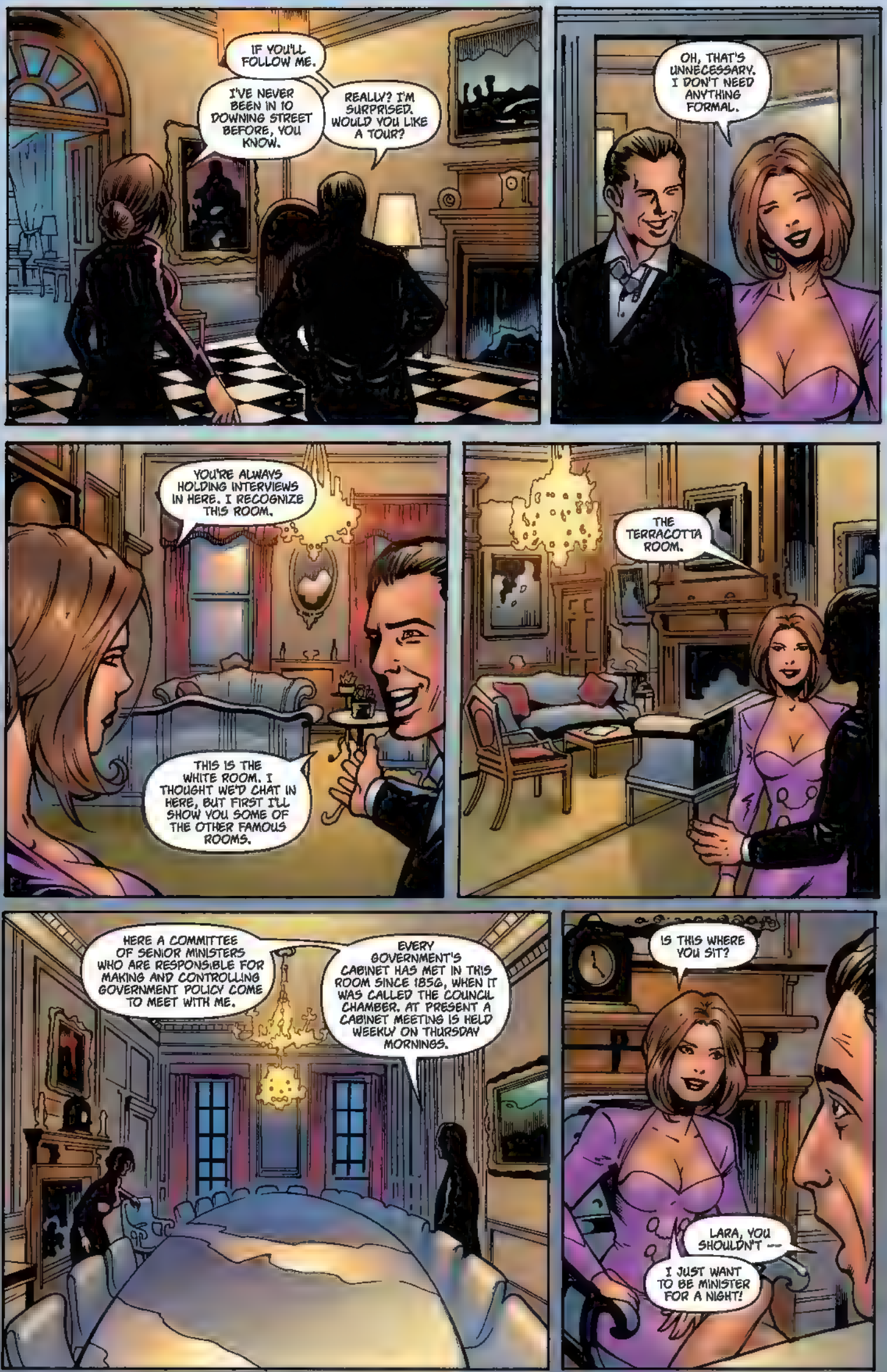
LETTERS
DREAMER DESIGN, ROBIN SPEHAR,
AND DENNIS HEISLER

COVER PENCILS
CLARENCE LANSANG

COVER INKS
JAY LEISTEN

COVER COLORS
JONATHAN D. SMITH

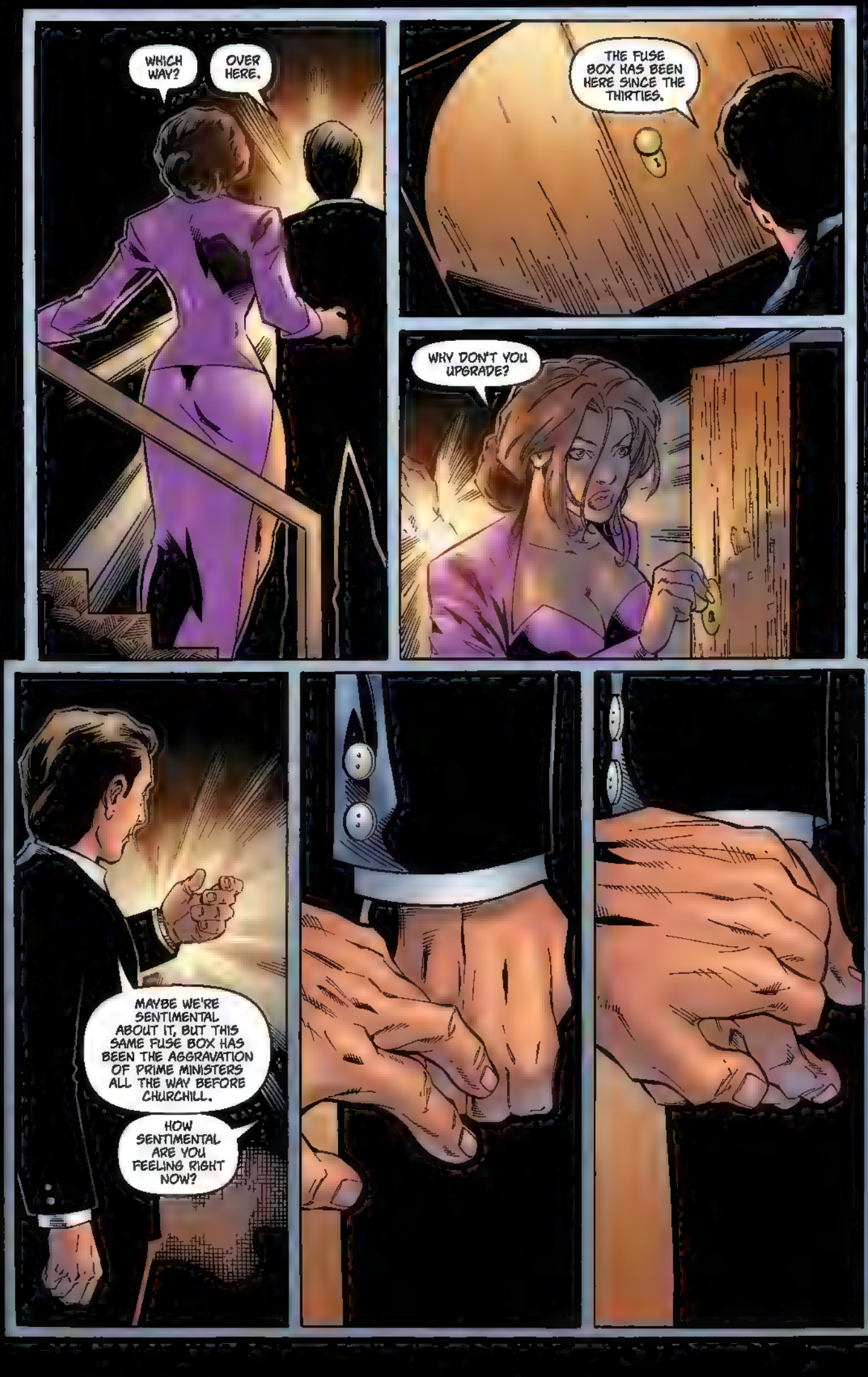
DOWNING STREET— HOME TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF GREAT BRITAIN.
DON'T YOU OWN A SET OF KEYS TO YOUR RESIDENCE?
IT'S TRADITION. THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE HERE TO LET ME IN. I DON'T HAVE KEYS THAT CAN BE STOLEN OR COPIED.
DOESN'T THAT BOTHER YOU?
NOT IN THE SLIGHTEST.
WOULD YOU LIKE KEYS ANYWAY?
DON'T YOU EVEN THINK THAT!

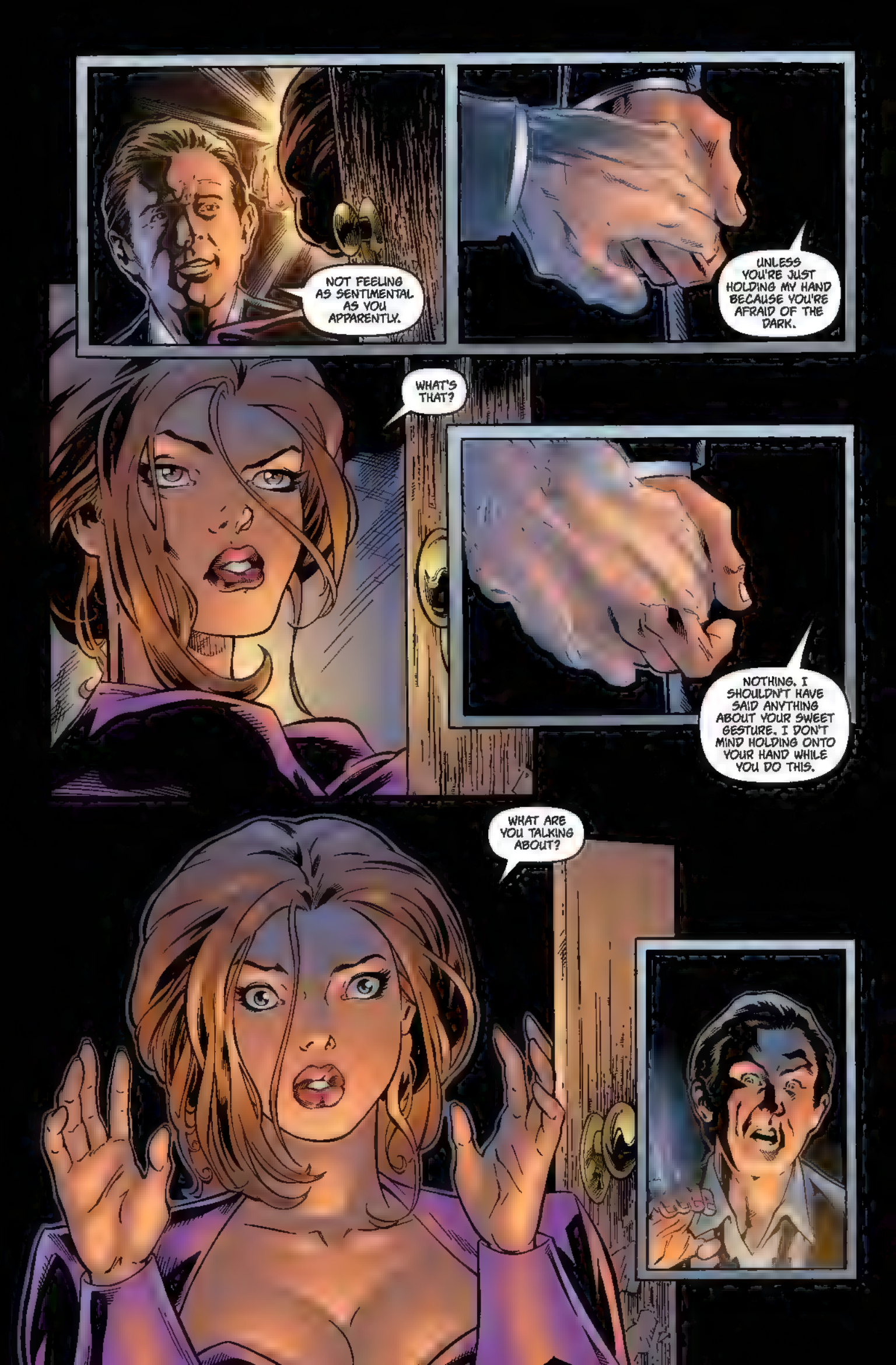

IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME.
I'VE NEVER BEEN IN 10 DOWNING STREET BEFORE, YOU KNOW.
REALLY? I'M SURPRISED. WOULD YOU LIKE A TOUR?
OH, THAT'S UNNECESSARY. I DON'T NEED ANYTHING FORMAL.
YOU'RE ALWAYS HOLDING INTERVIEWS IN HERE. I RECOGNIZE THIS ROOM.
THIS IS THE WHITE ROOM. I THOUGHT WE'D CHAT IN HERE, BUT FIRST I'LL SHOW YOU SOME OF THE OTHER FAMOUS ROOMS.
THE TERRACOTTA ROOM.
HERE A COMMITTEE OF SENIOR MINISTERS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING AND CONTROLLING GOVERNMENT POLICY COME TO MEET WITH ME.
EVERY GOVERNMENT'S CABINET HAS MET IN THIS ROOM SINCE 1856, WHEN IT WAS CALLED THE COUNCIL CHAMBER. AT PRESENT A CABINET MEETING IS HELD WEEKLY ON THURSDAY MORNINGS.
IS THIS WHERE YOU SIT?
LARA, YOU SHOULDN'T —
I JUST WANT TO BE MINISTER FOR A NIGHT!

I DON'T SUPPOSE SOMETHING LIKE FIRST LADY WOULD DO?
WHAT'D YOU SAY?
NO, IT STAYS LIKE THIS.
WHAT STAYS LIKE THIS?
THE CHAIR...IT'S TRADITION TO LEAVE IT ADJACENT TO THE TABLE WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER IS NOT PRESENT.
COME WITH ME. I'VE HAD THE FIRE LIT IN THE WHITE ROOM.
YOU KNOW, TONY. I'M AWFULLY FOND OF YOU...
OH MY...!

WHAT'S THAT ROOM CALLED?
THE PILLARED ROOM.
NOT A VERY IMAGINATIVE NAME.
THEY SAY THE ROOM IS HAUNTED.
NO KIDDING? ANY GHOSTS EVER BOTHERED YOU WHILE YOU LIVED HERE?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE TURNING ON THE LIGHTS. WHY'D IT GET SO DARK IN HERE?
DAMNABLE OLD WIRING! THE POWER FUSE MUST HAVE GONE OUT IN THE CELLAR.
THIS WOULDN'T BE SOME KIND OF JOKE, WOULD IT?
NO, IT HAPPENS EVERY NOW AND THEN. THE WIRING ON THE HOUSE HAS MOSTLY BEEN RESTORED, BUT SOME ROOMS ARE USED LESS THAN OTHERS.
WHAT'S THAT? EMERGENCY LIGHTING?

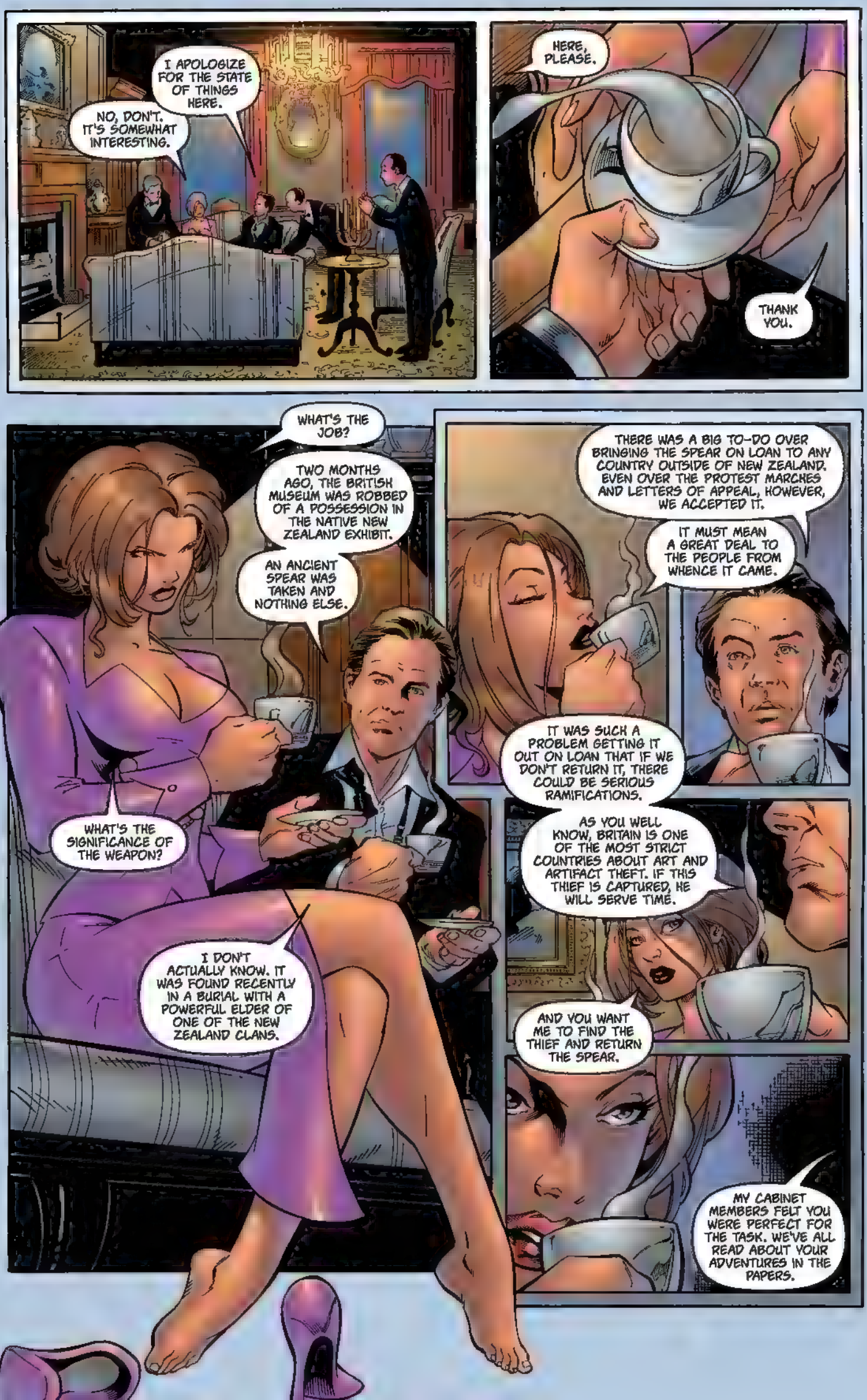
NO. THAT SHOULDN'T... EVEN BE POSSIBLE.
WHERE'S THE FUSE BOX? I'LL FLIP THE FUSE FOR YOU.
DOWN HERE. BUT I'M COMING WITH YOU.
DON'T BE FOOLISH, THIS PLACE IS MORE HEAVILY GUARDED THAN THE WHITE HOUSE!
NEVERTHELESS...
I'LL HELP YOU TAKE CARE OF IT.
NICE WATCH.
THANK YOU.


WHICH WAY?
OVER HERE.
THE FUSE BOX HAS BEEN HERE SINCE THE THIRTIES.
WHY DON'T YOU UPGRADE?
MAYBE WE'RE SENTIMENTAL ABOUT IT, BUT THIS SAME FUSE BOX HAS BEEN THE AGGRAVATION OF PRIME MINISTERS ALL THE WAY BEFORE CHURCHILL.
HOW SENTIMENTAL ARE YOU FEELING RIGHT NOW?


NOT FEELING AS SENTIMENTAL AS YOU APPARENTLY.
UNLESS YOU'RE JUST HOLDING MY HAND BECAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID OF THE DARK.
WHAT'S THAT?
NOTHING. I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR SWEET GESTURE. I DON'T MIND HOLDING ONTO YOUR HAND WHILE YOU DO THIS.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

DEAR GOD!
THAT WASN'T YOU?
NO, I WAS WORKING THE FUSES. THEY'RE BEING VERY STUBBORN.
TONY? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? THIS ISN'T SOME KIND OF HIGH SCHOOL JOKE IS IT ?
NO.
NO, I'M FINE.
YOUR POWER WON'T BE RESTORED FOR A WHILE. IT LOOKS LIKE RATS CHEWED THROUGH ONE OF THE CABLES DOWN HERE.
WHY DON'T WE GO BACK UP TO THE WHITE ROOM?
WE CAN LIGHT SOME CANDLES, YOU CAN CALL YOUR PEOPLE ABOUT THIS, AND THEN WE'LL DISCUSS THE PROJECT YOU'D LIKE ME TO WORK ON.

AND WE'LL HAVE SOME TEA BROUGHT UP.
THAT WOULD BE BEST.


I APOLOGIZE FOR THE STATE OF THINGS HERE.
NO, DON'T. IT'S SOMEWHAT INTERESTING.
HERE, PLEASE.
THANK YOU.
WHAT'S THE JOB?
TWO MONTHS AGO, THE BRITISH MUSEUM WAS ROBBED OF A POSSESSION IN THE NATIVE NEW ZEALAND EXHIBIT.
AN ANCIENT SPEAR WAS TAKEN AND NOTHING ELSE.
WHAT'S THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WEAPON?
I DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW. IT WAS FOUND RECENTLY IN A BURIAL WITH A POWERFUL ELDER OF ONE OF THE NEW ZEALAND CLANS.
THERE WAS A BIG TO-DO OVER BRINGING THE SPEAR ON LOAN TO ANY COUNTRY OUTSIDE OF NEW ZEALAND. EVEN OVER THE PROTEST MARCHES AND LETTERS OF APPEAL, HOWEVER, WE ACCEPTED IT.
IT MUST MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO THE PEOPLE FROM WHENCE IT CAME.
IT WAS SUCH A PROBLEM GETTING IT OUT ON LOAN THAT IF WE DON'T RETURN IT, THERE COULD BE SERIOUS RAMIFICATIONS.
AS YOU WELL KNOW, BRITAIN IS ONE OF THE MOST STRICT COUNTRIES ABOUT ART AND ARTIFACT THEFT. IF THIS THIEF IS CAPTURED, HE WILL SERVE TIME.
AND YOU WANT ME TO FIND THE THIEF AND RETURN THE SPEAR.
MY CABINET MEMBERS FELT YOU WERE PERFECT FOR THE TASK. WE'VE ALL READ ABOUT YOUR ADVENTURES IN THE PAPERS.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE SPEAR OTHER THAN ITS INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE?
I REALLY AM EMBARRASSED TO SAY THAT I DON'T KNOW. I WAS ONLY APPRISED OF ITS DISAPPEARANCE LAST NIGHT, AND KNEW I'D BE SEEING YOU AT THE REUNION, SO...
IT'S A SOUL SPEAR... FOR THE DEAD...
WHO SAID THAT?
SHOW YOURSELF!
YOU DON'T BELIEVE THE RUMORS ABOUT THE HAUNTINGS HERE, DO YOU?
DO YOU?

WHAT'S THAT?
A PORTABLE LIGHT SOURCE.
YOU KEEP FLARES IN YOUR ---
YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU'RE GONNA NEED THEM!
SPEAK. WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE?
THE ONE WHO FINDS THE SPEAR...
THAT'S ME.
YOU WILL BE SENT TO THE UNDERWORLD... LOST IN GRAVES... DARKNESS FOREVER...
WHAT?!

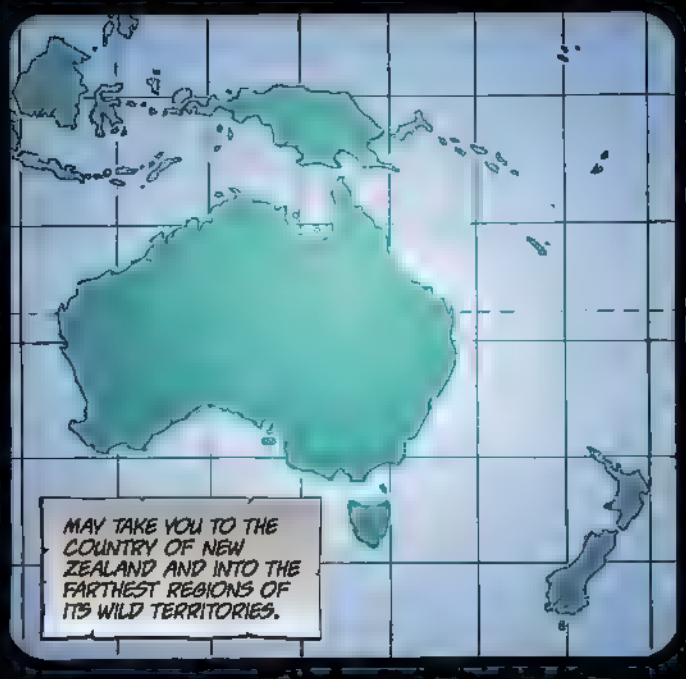
SHREEEEEEEH
FWOOOSH
TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW!

WHO SENT YOU?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SPEAR?

DAMN. THEY WOULDN'T SAY ANYTHING.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, BUT, WHERE ARE YOUR BODYGUARDS?
SECURITY? HELLO? HELLO?
NO ANSWER.
DO YOU SMELL...?
CIGAR SMOKE?
WELL DONE, WELL DONE. BY GOD YOU WILL MAKE A PERFECT ASSAILANT AGAINST THE THIEF OF THE SPEAR.
WINSTON CHURCHILL!!

WHY DO YOU LOOK SO SHOCKED, TONY? THIS IS MY HOME TOO.
SIR! I — YOU'RE — SIR!
HMM...
WHY DIDN'T I PUT THIS TOGETHER EARLIER?
A GHOST SHIP...
A GHOST CITY...
A GHOSTLY GUARDIAN...
AND GHOSTLY VISITORS...

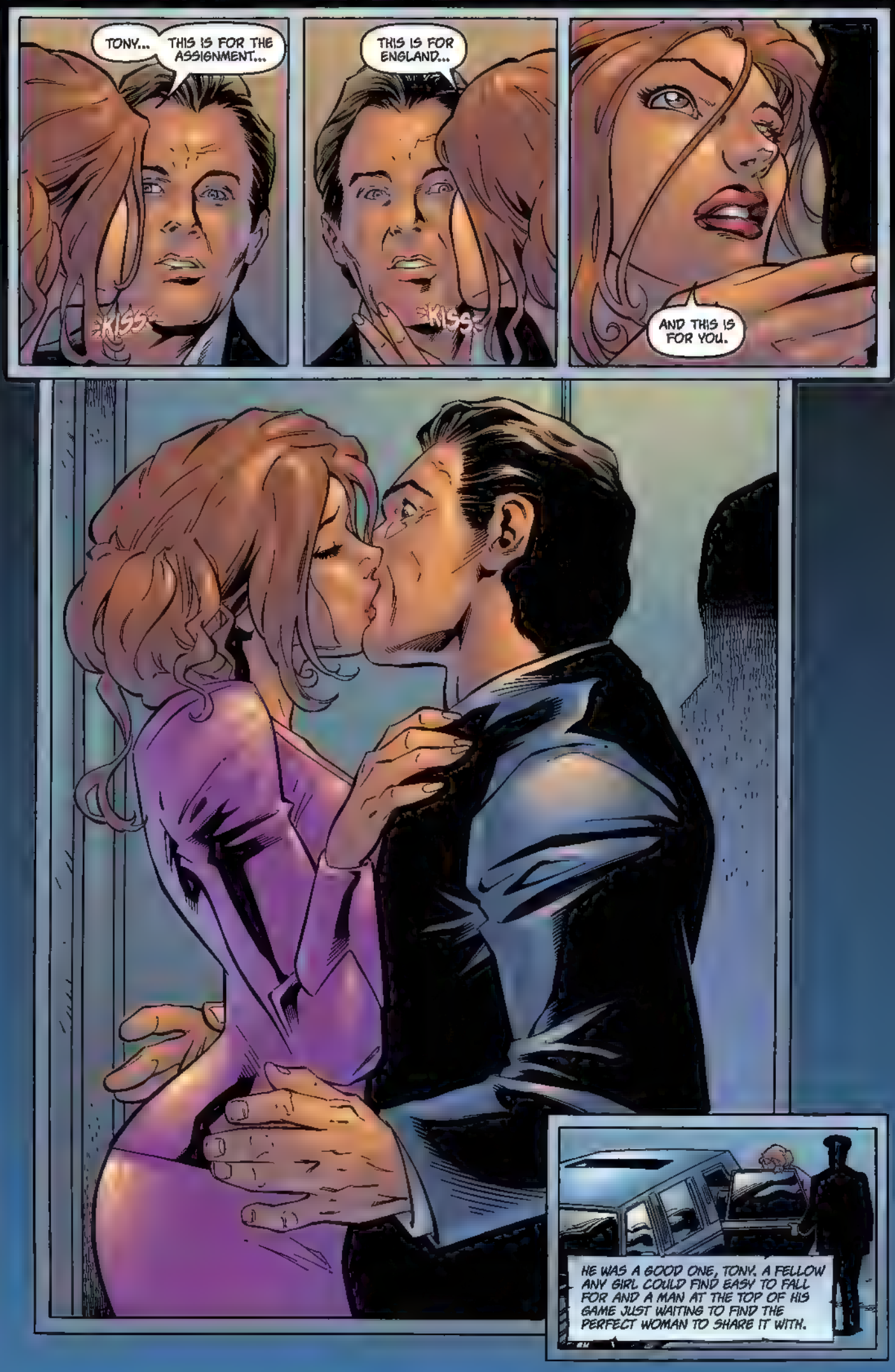
YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET MY ATTENTION FROM DAY ONE!
I'VE NO IDEA ON THAT, MY LADY. I WAS ONLY SUMMONED HERE AS A LAST RESORT.
STILL, THAT'S A LOT OF GHOSTLY INTERACTION, EVEN FOR MY LIFESTYLE. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S A MERE COINCIDENCE.
RIGHT THEN. I'LL MAKE THIS BRIEF. I KNOW TONY HAS A LOT TO DO BEFORE THE MEETING OF MINISTERS TOMORROW.
NOW WHERE IS THAT...?
AH!
I DO LOVE TECHNOLOGY. I NEVER GET TO PLAY WITH ANY OF THE GOOD STUFF THESE DAYS.

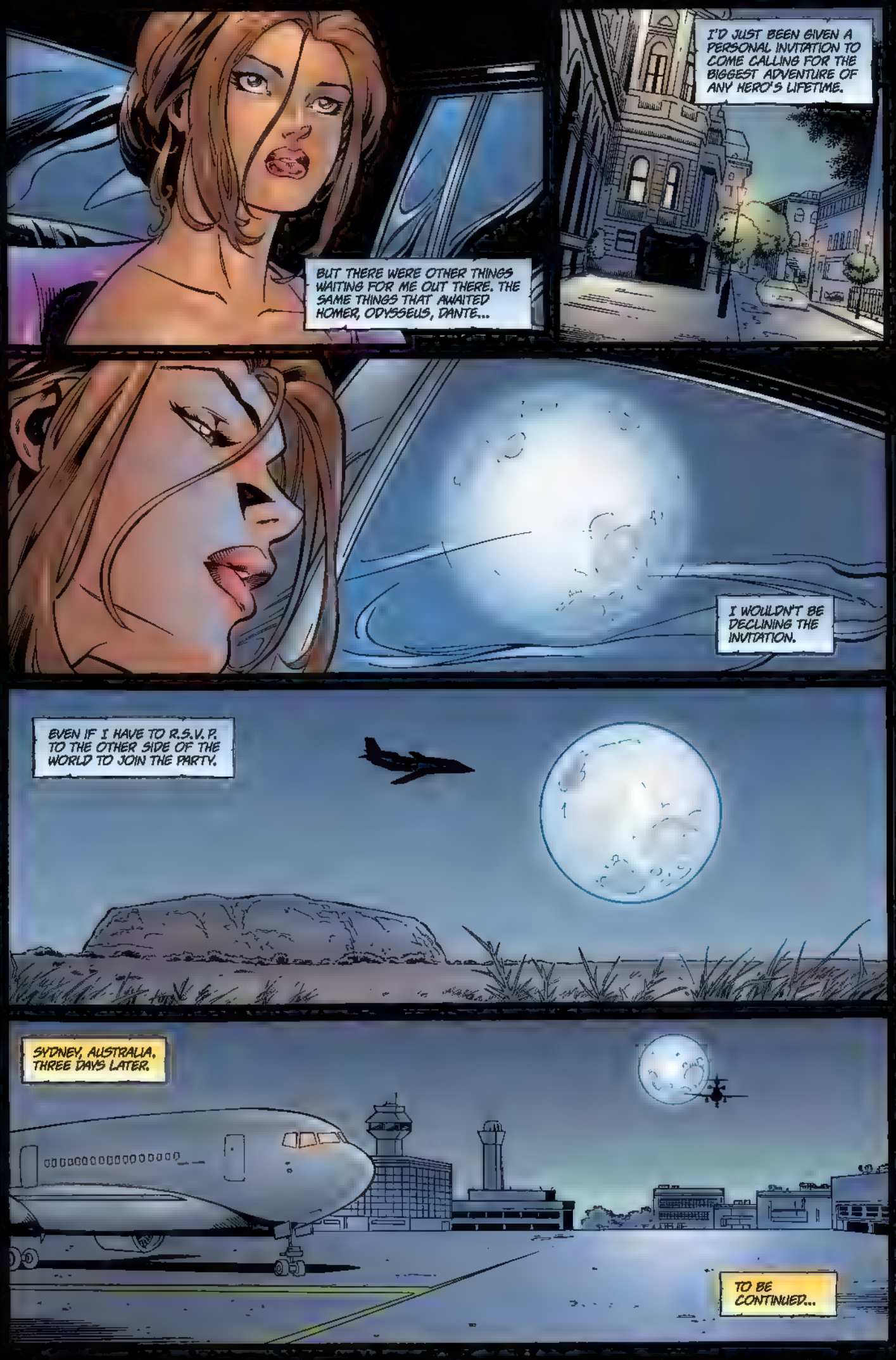


AND THOSE WHO COME BACK FROM THE UNDERWORLD OF THE MAORI ARE FOREVER CHANGED.

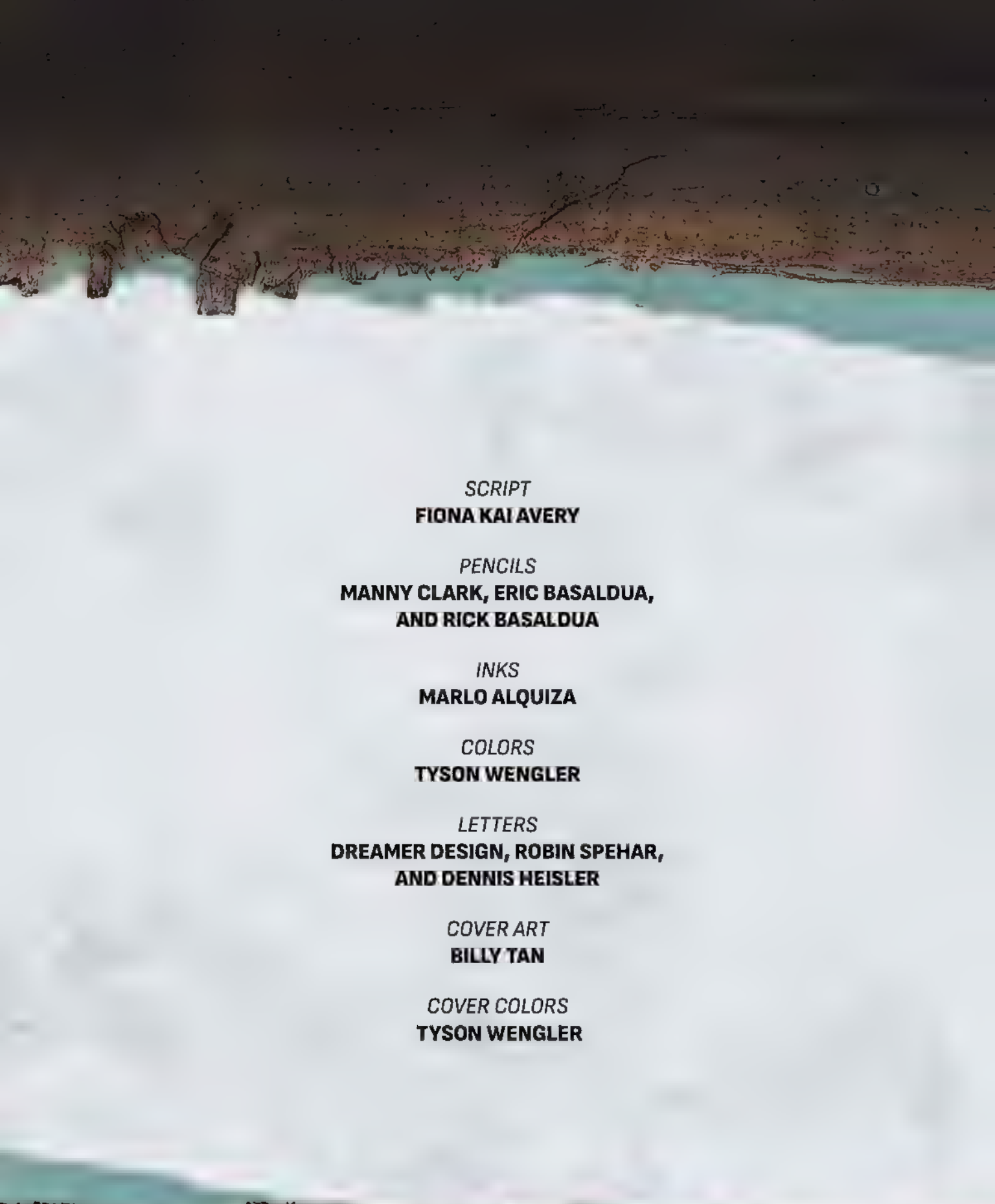
I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO HAVE YOUR ANSWER.
ASKED BY THE MAORI UNDERWORLD?
YES, THROUGH MY PART OF THE UNDERWORLD: HELL!
SIR! YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY BE IN HELL!
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT WAR DOES TO YOU, DO YOU? BY MY OWN CHOICE I WOULD RATHER SERVE IN HELL, SO THAT INNOCENT PEOPLE HAD THE CHANCE TO LIVE WELL IN THIS WORLD.
I SEE, SIR.
I STILL EAGERLY AWAIT YOUR OWN CONTRIBUTION TO OUR GROWING RANKS DOWN HERE. WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE, IT SHOULD BE A FINE DECISION FOR OUR PEOPLE, I CAN TELL BY YOUR CHARACTER, BOY.
MISS CROFT?
TELL THEM I'M COMING.

THEY WILL BE HAPPY TO HEAR THAT. WE WILL BEGIN PREPARATIONS SHOULD YOU ARRIVE IN OUR REALM LOOKING FOR THE SPEAR. JUST TELL THEM CHURCHILL SENT YOU, MY DEAR...
DO YOU THINK IT WAS SOMETHING WE ATE AT THE REUNION?
A GROUP HALLUCINATION?
I THINK IT WAS REAL. AND I'D BETTER GET A HEAD START ON THIS CASE.
I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S WISE TO GO. IT SEEMS TOO DANGEROUS...
AT BEST IT'S A RECOVERED SPEAR, AT WORST IT'S A TRIP TO THE UNDERWORLD. EVERY HERO HAS TO MAKE THE TRIP SOMETIME, I'M TOLD.
WELL, I'LL HAVE THE DRIVER TAKE YOU HOME. AT LEAST I'LL KNOW YOU ARRIVE SAFELY AT ONE DESTINATION ON THIS TRIP.


TONY...
THIS IS FOR THE ASSIGNMENT...
KISS
THIS IS FOR ENGLAND...
KISS
AND THIS IS FOR YOU.
HE WAS A GOOD ONE, TONY. A FELLOW ANY GIRL COULD FIND EASY TO FALL FOR AND A MAN AT THE TOP OF HIS GAME JUST WAITING TO FIND THE PERFECT WOMAN TO SHARE IT WITH.


I'D JUST BEEN GIVEN A PERSONAL INVITATION TO COME CALLING FOR THE BIGGEST ADVENTURE OF ANY HERO'S LIFETIME.
BUT THERE WERE OTHER THINGS WAITING FOR ME OUT THERE. THE SAME THINGS THAT AWAITED HOMER, ODYSSEUS, DANTE...
I WOULDN'T BE DECLINING THE INVITATION.
EVEN IF I HAVE TO R.S.V.P. TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD TO JOIN THE PARTY.
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, THREE DAYS LATER.
TO BE CONTINUED...

WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE
$ 50,000



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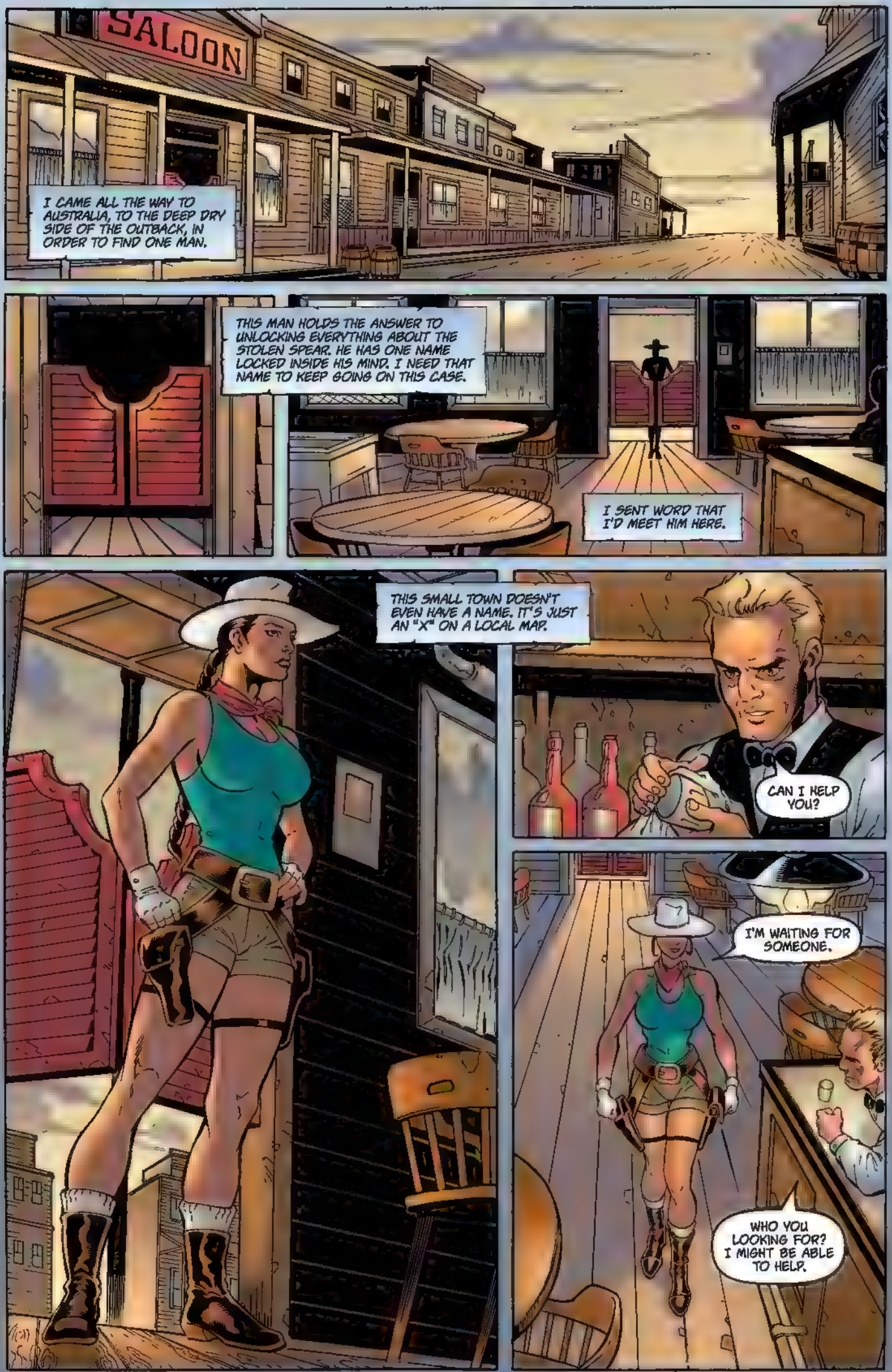

SALOON
I CAME ALL THE WAY TO AUSTRALIA, TO THE DEEP DRY SIDE OF THE OUTBACK, IN ORDER TO FIND ONE MAN.
THIS MAN HOLDS THE ANSWER TO UNLOCKING EVERYTHING ABOUT THE STOLEN SPEAR. HE HAS ONE NAME LOCKED INSIDE HIS MIND. I NEED THAT NAME TO KEEP GOING ON THIS CASE.
I SENT WORD THAT I'D MEET HIM HERE.
THIS SMALL TOWN DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A NAME. IT'S JUST AN "X" ON A LOCAL MAP.
CAN I HELP YOU?
I'M WAITING FOR SOMEONE.
WHO YOU LOOKING FOR? I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP.

DON'T KNOW HIM.
WE DO HAVE A FEW RULES HERE.
WHAT RULES?
NO GUNS, NO FIGHTS, AND NO PUKING AT THE BAR.
VRRROOOOOOOMMMMMM
SALOON
THAT'S PROBABLY HIM. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

ARE YOU STAN WOODROOF?

I NEED SOME INFORMATION—
I'M LOOKING FOR THE AMEO TRIBE!
I'M TOLD I CAN FIND A CONTACT HERE?
YOU GOTTA EARN THE RIGHT TO KNOW ANYTHING LIKE THAT AROUND HERE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, EARN THE RIGHT? I CAN PAY WHATEVER FEE YOU—
NOPE. IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY. YOU'RE ASKING DANGEROUS QUESTIONS, MISS.
WHAT'S THAT??
VRRRRROOOOOOOMMMMMM

OH, BLOODY HELL!
CH-CHOK
CH-CHOK
CH-CHOK

OVER THERE-- OVER THERE!
PROVE MYSELF! WHY IS IT WHENEVER I GO ANYWHERE AND NEED SOME ANSWERS, I END UP HAVING TO PROVE MYSELF?
ARE YOU GOING TO SHOOT THEM?
WELL, YOU SAID NO GUNS ALLOWED.
IT'S A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT RULE NOW, DON'T YOU THINK? WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT, I CAN'T SHOOT PEOPLE.
WHY?
LET'S JUST SAY I MADE A PROMISE.

A PROMISE I'LL NEVER GO BACK ON...
BECAUSE IT WAS FOR HIM...
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'LL JUST SIT HERE.
WAIT, MISS!

CHEERIO, BOYS!

STOP IT! HOLD YOUR FIRE! NO!
PLINK!
SNIK!
CHING!
SNAP!
CHINK!
CRACK!
TWANG!

SALOON
RUMMMMMMMMMMBLE!

CRRRAASH!

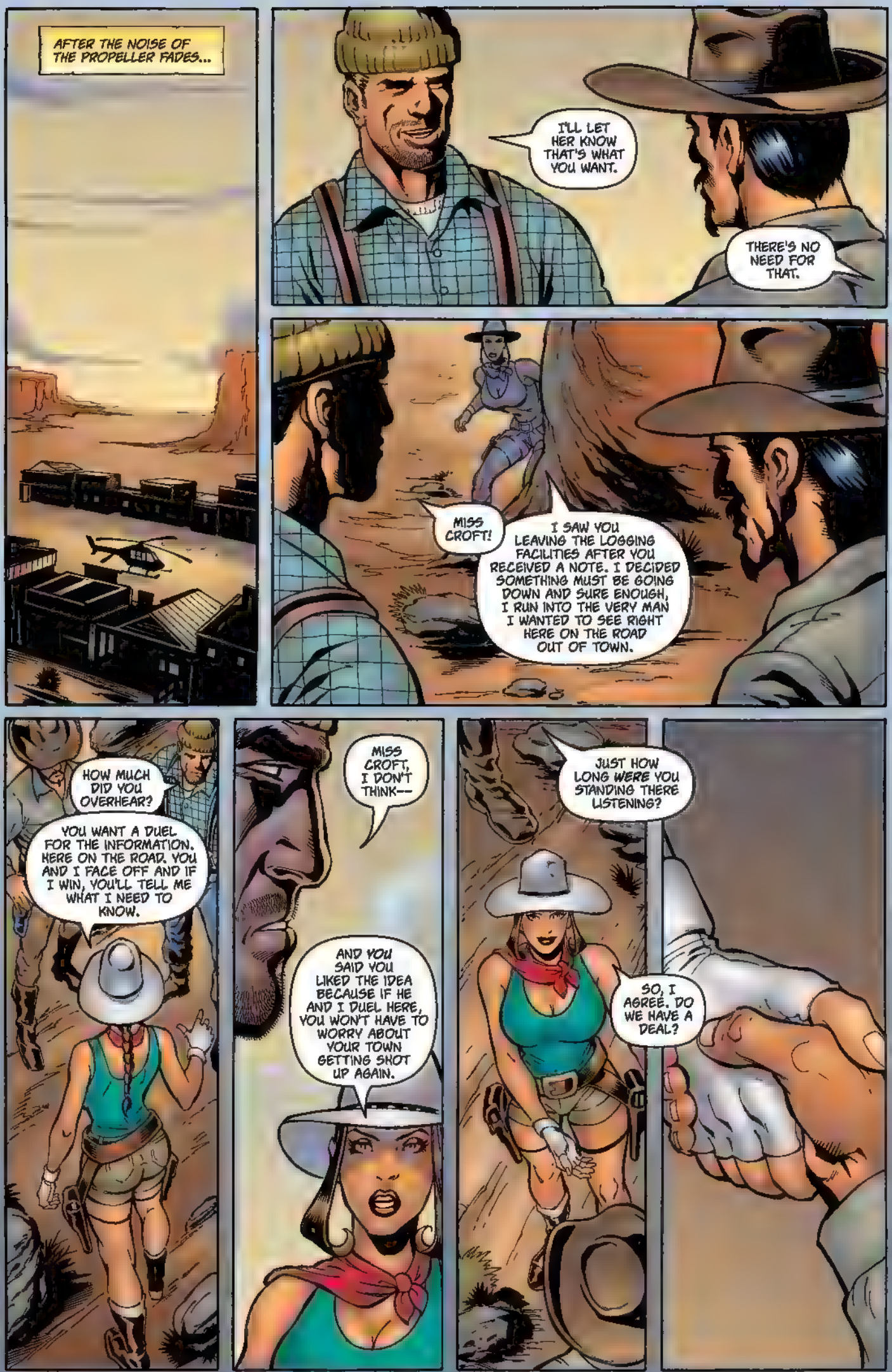
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?
JEEZUS CHRISTMAS! WHAT IN HELL YOU TRYIN' TO DO?
YOU SHOT UP OUR GOODS!
YOU GOT THE LOGGERS INVOLVED. WHAT A MESS!
DON'T WORRY. I CAN PAY FOR THE DAMAGES. I'M USED TO IT.
WHAT ABOUT THEM?

THEY'LL HAVE TO FILE A PROPERTY DAMAGE REPORT I GUESS. I'LL LET THOSE LOGGERS SORT IT ALL OUT.
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DRINK?
UH...
HEH.
RIGHT, THEN. I'LL HAVE THAT.
YEAH, GET OUT OF HERE! JERKS! WE'LL SKIN YOU ALIVE NEXT TIME!
YOU'VE REALLY DONE IT NOW.
YES, AND I'M COUNTING ON THEM TO COME BACK.
THEN YOU'D BEST LEAVE, YOUNG LADY.
KEVIN!
JUST CHECKING IN BEFORE I FILE A DAMAGE REPORT. AND FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FILE ONE TOO.

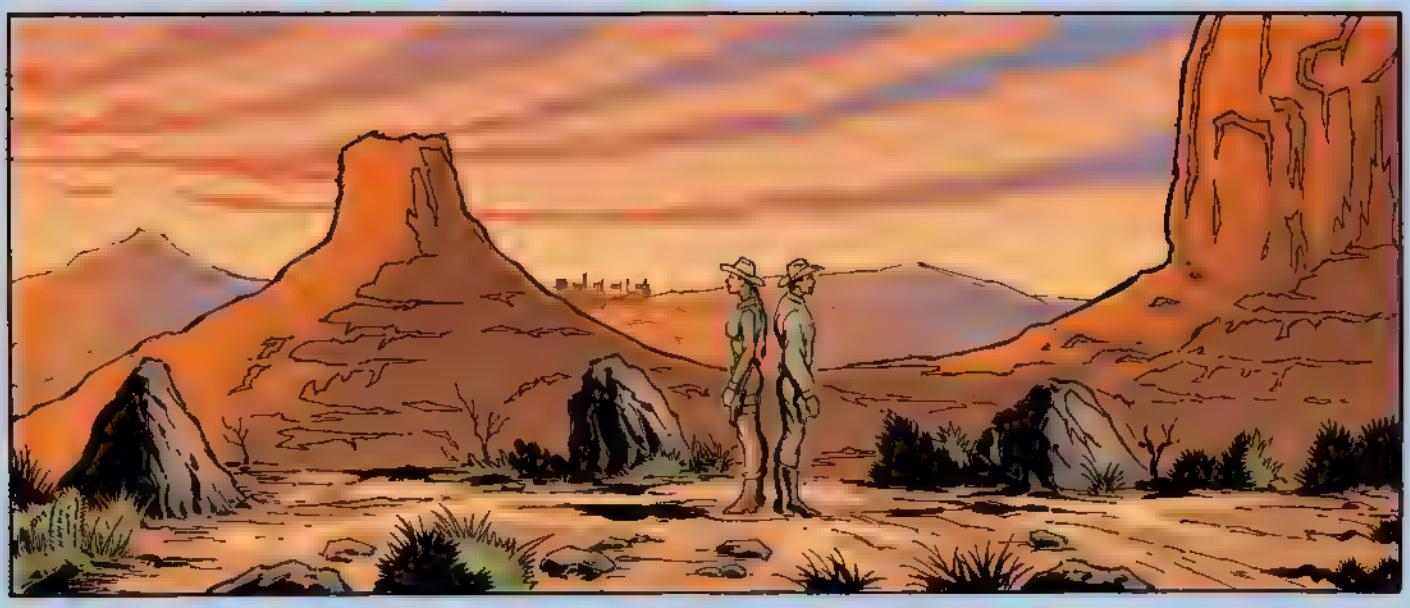
I'M NOT LEAVING.
MISS...
CROFT. LARA CROFT.
I RUN THIS TOWN. THE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ONLY COME HERE WHEN I TELL THEM TO, SEE? IF I SAY YOU NEED TO LEAVE, THEN YOU NEED TO LEAVE.
I CAME HERE TO ASK THOSE MEN FOR SOME INFORMATION AND I CAN'T LEAVE UNTIL I HAVE WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.
YOU KNOW THEM OR SOMETHING?
NOT AT ALL. BUT THEY HAVE IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING A THEFT FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM. I NEED THAT INFORMATION. NO MATTER THE COST.
THEN, PERHAPS YOU'D BETTER STAY WITH US WHERE WE CAN PROTECT YOU.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. I CAN LOOK AFTER MYSELF.
YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN THE CAUSE OF ENOUGH PROPERTY DAMAGE AROUND HERE. IF YOU'RE WITH US, THEY WON'T COME IN WITH GUNS TO DO THE NEGOTIATING ON YOUR INFORMATION.
COME ON, THEN.
I NEED TO LEAVE SOME COLLATERAL UNTIL MY ATTORNEY SHOWS UP WITH THE FUNDS TO HELP THIS MAN REBUILD HIS TAVERN.

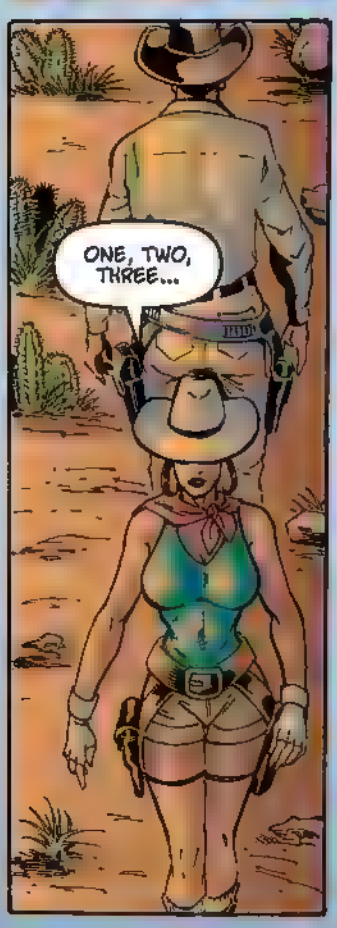
I SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONTACT THEM OVERNIGHT AND IN THE NEXT DAY SOME FUNDS AND SUPPLIES WILL COME THROUGH FOR YOU.
YOU CAN KEEP THAT UNTIL IT ALL COMES THROUGH. SORRY FOR THE MESS.
...THANKS.
SALOON
QUITE SURE OF YOURSELF, AREN'T YOU, MISS CROFT?
I JUST BELIEVE IN DOING THE RIGHT THING. IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE A BUSINESS CARD HANDY FOR HIM.
I'M VERY INTERESTED TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE, IF YOU ARE INDEED INVESTIGATING A CRIME.
SMITHSON, IT'S LARA CROFT. LISTEN, I NEED A RELIEF TEAM SENT IN. YEAH, THERE'S BEEN A LITTLE DAMAGE. NO, NO, NOTHING LIKE LAST TIME. I PROMISE THERE WAS NO TNT INVOLVED. THANKS, LOVE.
IS IT THIS WAY?
YES— THIS WAY.

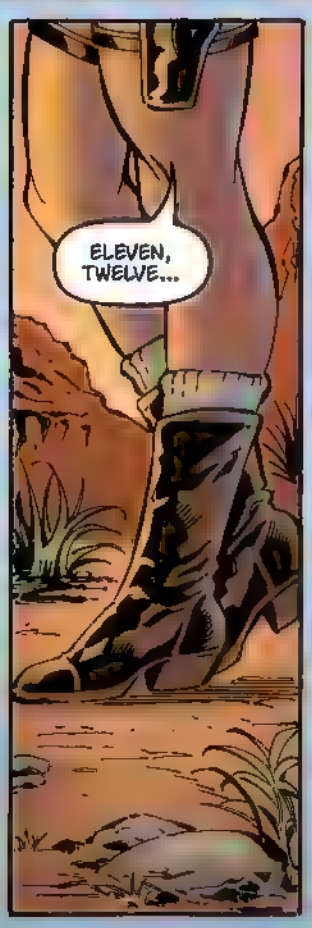
THE NEXT DAY...
YOU WANTED TO SEE ME?
THEY CONFER AS A CHOPPER PASSES BY.
CROFT

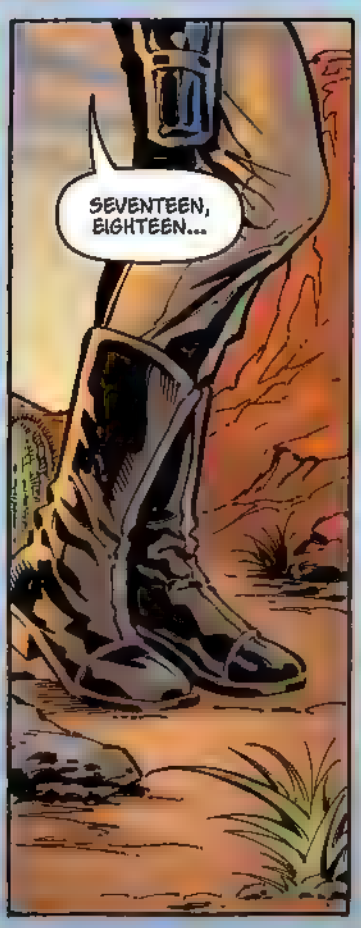

AFTER THE NOISE OF THE PROPELLER FADES...
I'LL LET HER KNOW THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT.
MISS CROFT!
I SAW YOU LEAVING THE LOGGING FACILITIES AFTER YOU RECEIVED A NOTE. I DECIDED SOMETHING MUST BE GOING DOWN AND SURE ENOUGH, I RUN INTO THE VERY MAN I WANTED TO SEE RIGHT HERE ON THE ROAD OUT OF TOWN.
HOW MUCH DID YOU OVERHEAR?
YOU WANT A DUEL FOR THE INFORMATION. HERE ON THE ROAD. YOU AND I FACE OFF AND IF I WIN, YOU'LL TELL ME WHAT I NEED TO KNOW.
MISS CROFT, I DON'T THINK--
AND YOU SAID YOU LIKED THE IDEA BECAUSE IF HE AND I DUEL HERE, YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT YOUR TOWN GETTING SHOT UP AGAIN.
JUST HOW LONG WERE YOU STANDING THERE LISTENING?
SO, I AGREE. DO WE HAVE A DEAL?

IS THIS THE ESTABLISHMENT IN QUESTION?
I'M SMITHSON. I'M HERE WITH YOUR REIMBURSEMENT.
THANKS, WON'T YOU COME IN?
THERE'S A SHOOT OUT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN!
THAT GIRL'S GONNA GET PULVERIZED. NO ONE STANDS UP TO STAN'S AIM!
SERVES HER RIGHT FOR SCREWING UP OUR SUPPLIES AND NOT BEATING FEET!
LET'S JUST SAY I MADE A PROMISE.
SHE LEFT HER OTHER GUN...

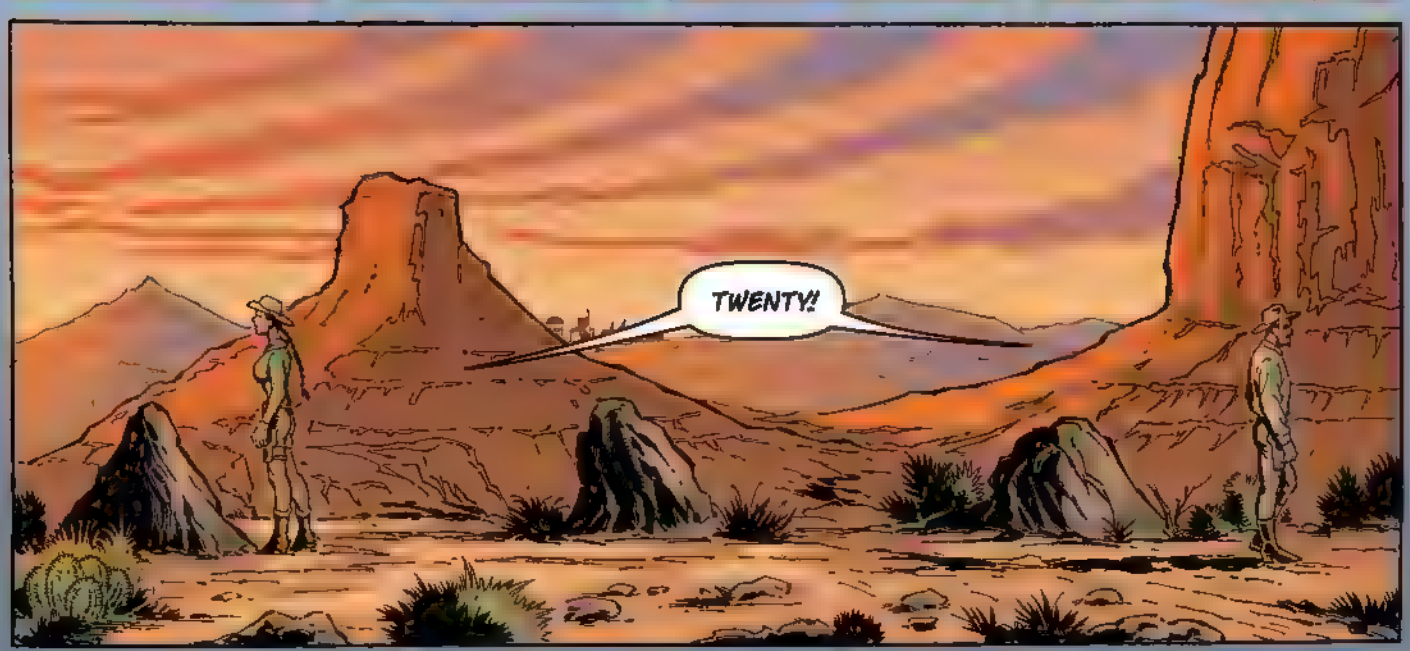


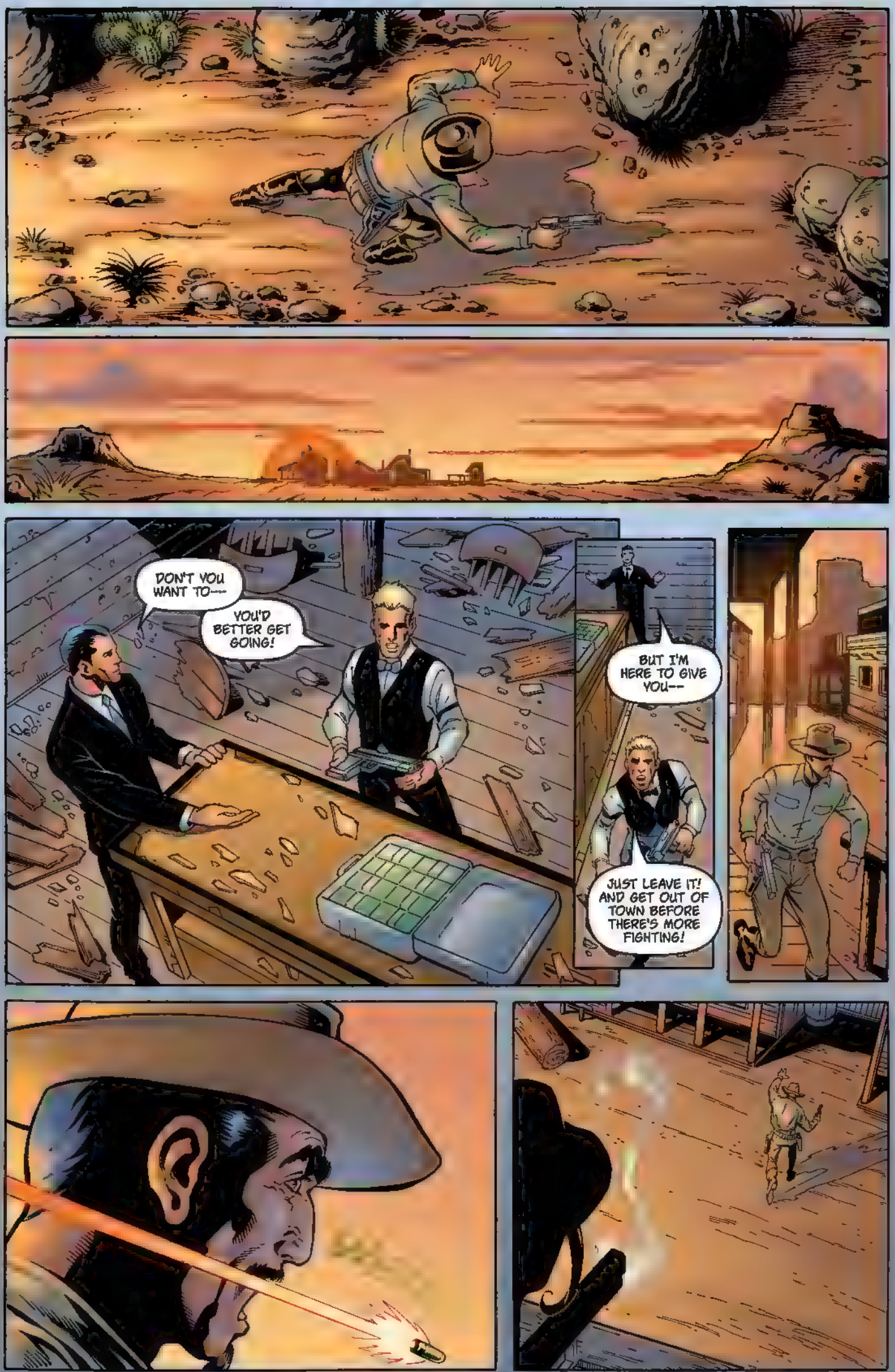

ONE, TWO, THREE...


ELEVEN, TWELVE...


SEVENTEEN, EIGHTEEN...

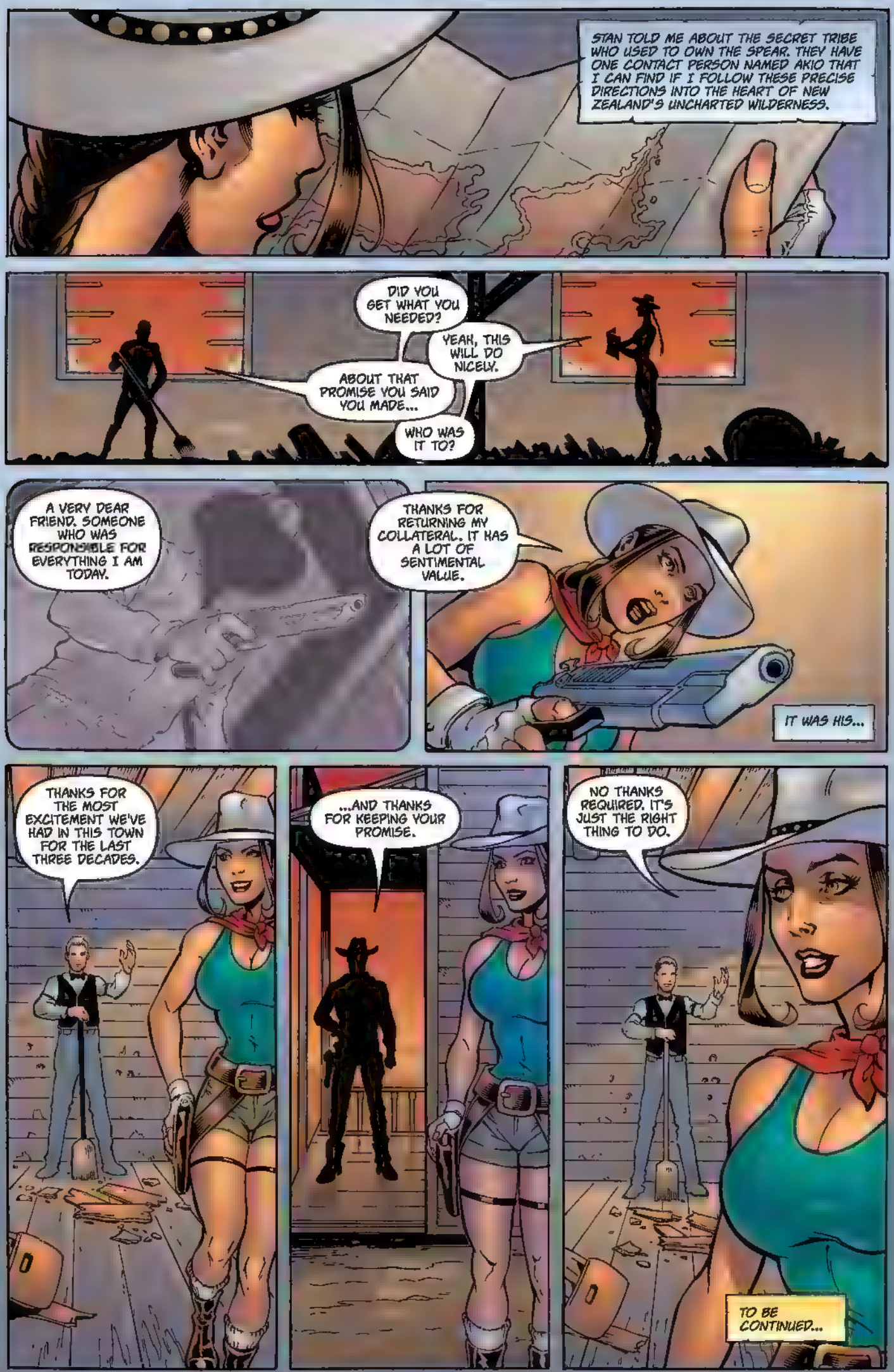
NINETEEN...


TWENTY!

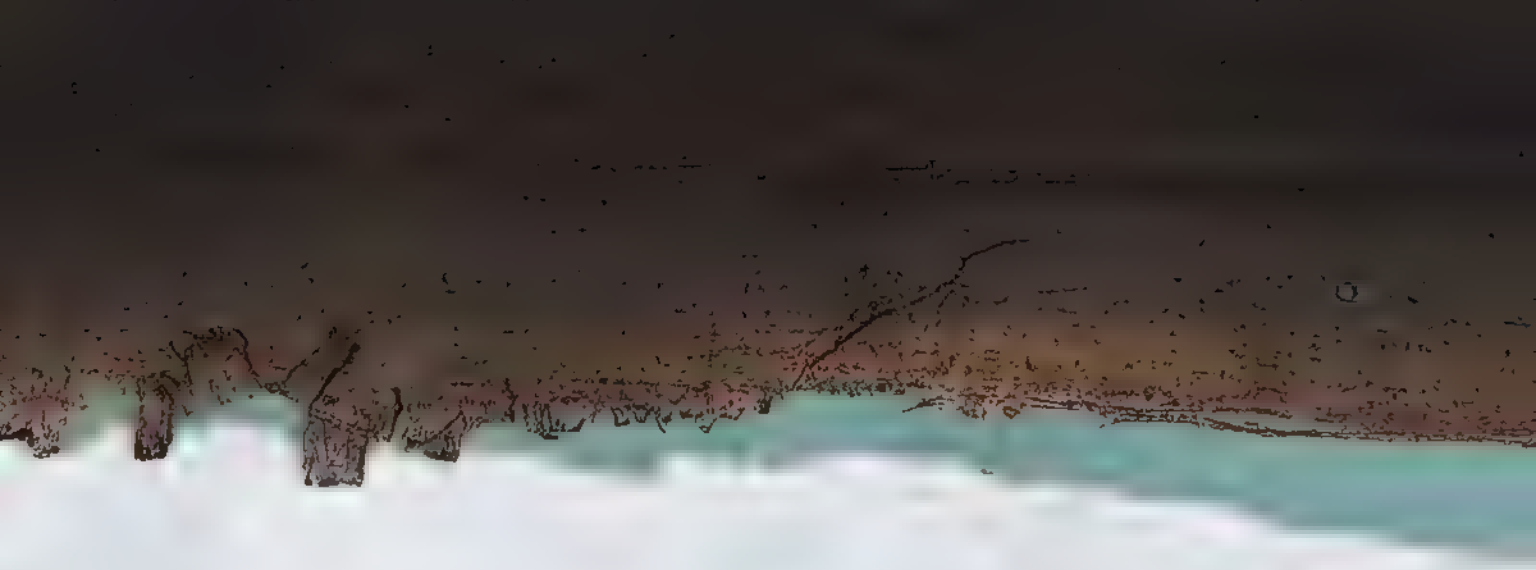

DON'T YOU WANT TO---
YOU'D BETTER GET GOING!
BUT I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU--
JUST LEAVE IT! AND GET OUT OF TOWN BEFORE THERE'S MORE FIGHTING!

BLAM-PING!
ACK!
YES, MISS CROFT? CERTAINLY. I CAN DO THAT RIGHT NOW.
WHUPP WHUPP
CROFT
WHUPP
WHUPP
WHUPP WHUPP
WHUPP
=HACK-COUGH!=
MISS CROFT! YOU LEFT THIS!

"I WIN."
"BUT YOU DIDN'T SHOOT ME. THE LOSER OF A DUEL IS THE ONE WHO GETS SHOT—"
"NOPE, I DON'T NEED TO SHOOT YOU. YOU'RE DISARMED AND I HAVE YOU IN THE PERFECT PLACE TO GET THE INFORMATION I NEED FROM YOU WITHOUT DOING ANY FURTHER DAMAGE.
"NOW, KINDLY GIVE ME THE INFORMATION I CAME HERE FOR."


STAN TOLD ME ABOUT THE SECRET TRIBE WHO USED TO OWN THE SPEAR. THEY HAVE ONE CONTACT PERSON NAMED AKIO THAT I CAN FIND IF I FOLLOW THESE PRECISE DIRECTIONS INTO THE HEART OF NEW ZEALAND'S UNCHARTED WILDERNESS.
DID YOU GET WHAT YOU NEEDED?
YEAH, THIS WILL DO NICELY.
ABOUT THAT PROMISE YOU SAID YOU MADE...
WHO WAS IT TO?
A VERY DEAR FRIEND. SOMEONE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING I AM TODAY.
THANKS FOR RETURNING MY COLLATERAL. IT HAS A LOT OF SENTIMENTAL VALUE.
IT WAS HIS...
THANKS FOR THE MOST EXCITEMENT WE'VE HAD IN THIS TOWN FOR THE LAST THREE DECADES.
...AND THANKS FOR KEEPING YOUR PROMISE.
NO THANKS REQUIRED. IT'S JUST THE RIGHT THING TO DO.
TO BE CONTINUED...

7024



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DAVID FINCH

COVER INKS
ART THIBERT

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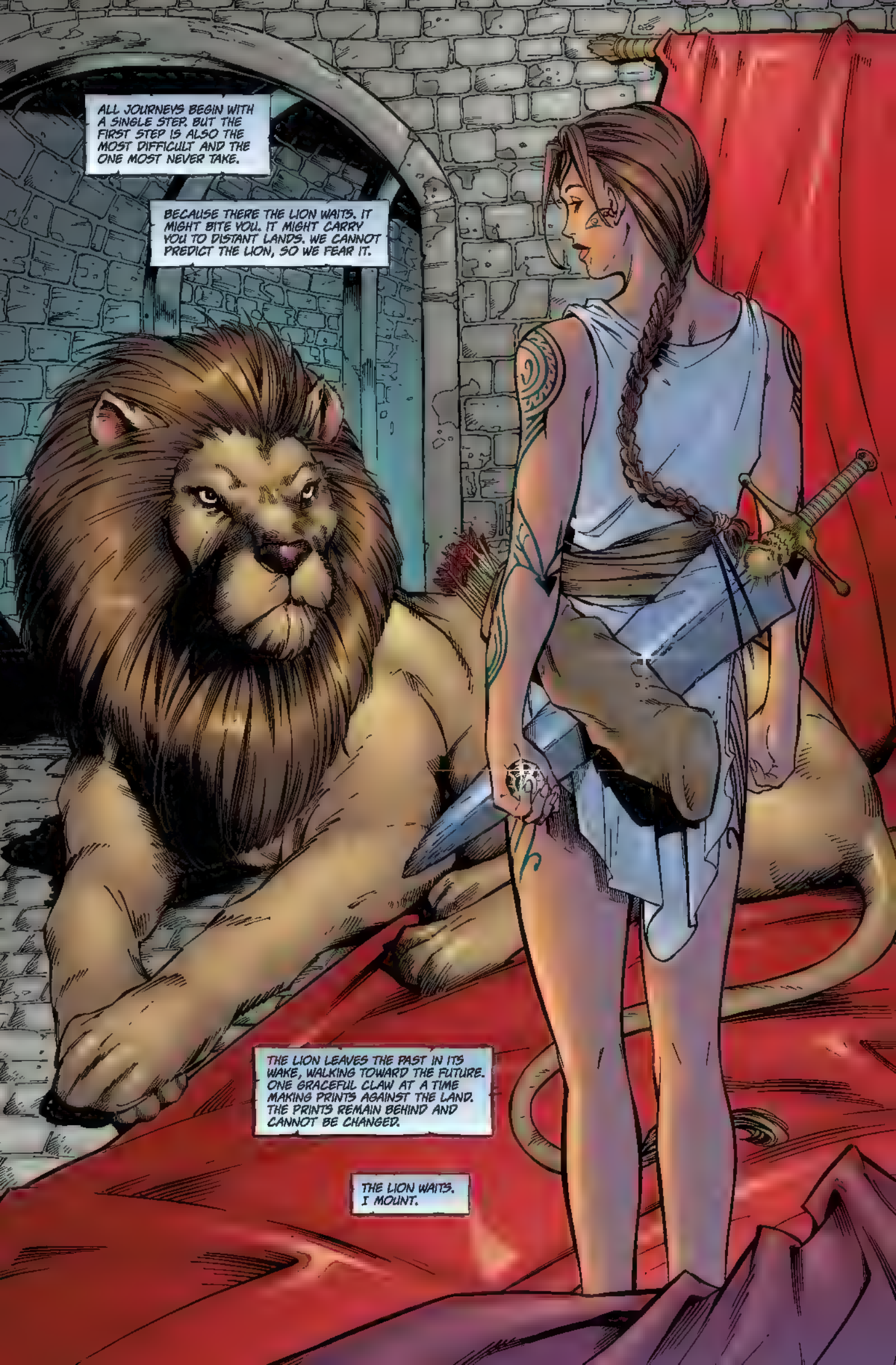
I AM AWAKE.
I AM ASLEEP.
I AM NOT-AWAKE.
I AM NOT-ASLEEP.
I AM...
I AM ASKING MYSELF THE SAME QUESTION I ALWAYS ASK... HOW DO I GET MYSELF INTO THESE SITUATIONS?
THANK YOU...

THANK YOU FOR WHAT?
FOR SAVING THE DREAM SPEAR.
BUT... I HAVEN'T SAVED IT YET. HAVE I?
THERE IS NO YET. THERE IS NO BEFORE.

I'M STILL IN THE DREAM TIME.
YES.
SOMETHING WENT WRONG.
YES.
I NEVER MADE IT OUT, DID I?
NO.

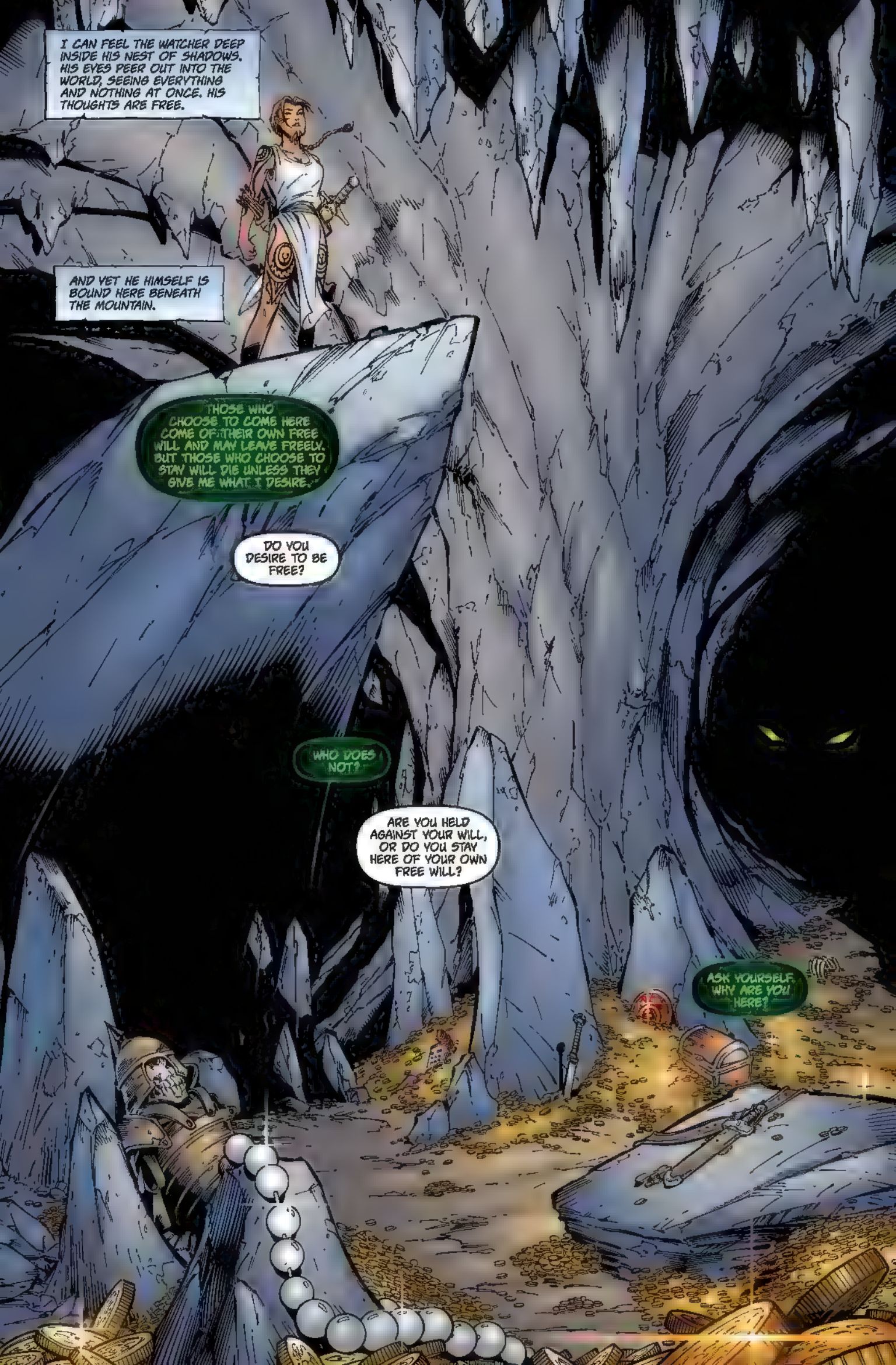
YOU KNEW THE RISKS GOING IN.
WILL I BE STUCK HERE FOREVER?
FOREVER IS MADE OF MOMENTS. TO BE IN THE MOMENT IS TO BE FOREVER. BUT THIS MOMENT... COULD BE A VERY LONG ONE.
WHAT MUST I DO TO FIND MY WAY OUT OF HERE AGAIN?
FIND THE MOMENT IN WHICH YOU FAILED YOURSELF AND CORRECT IT.
HOW DO I---
FREE YOUR MIND AND IT WILL ALL COME TO YOU AGAIN. LET GO.

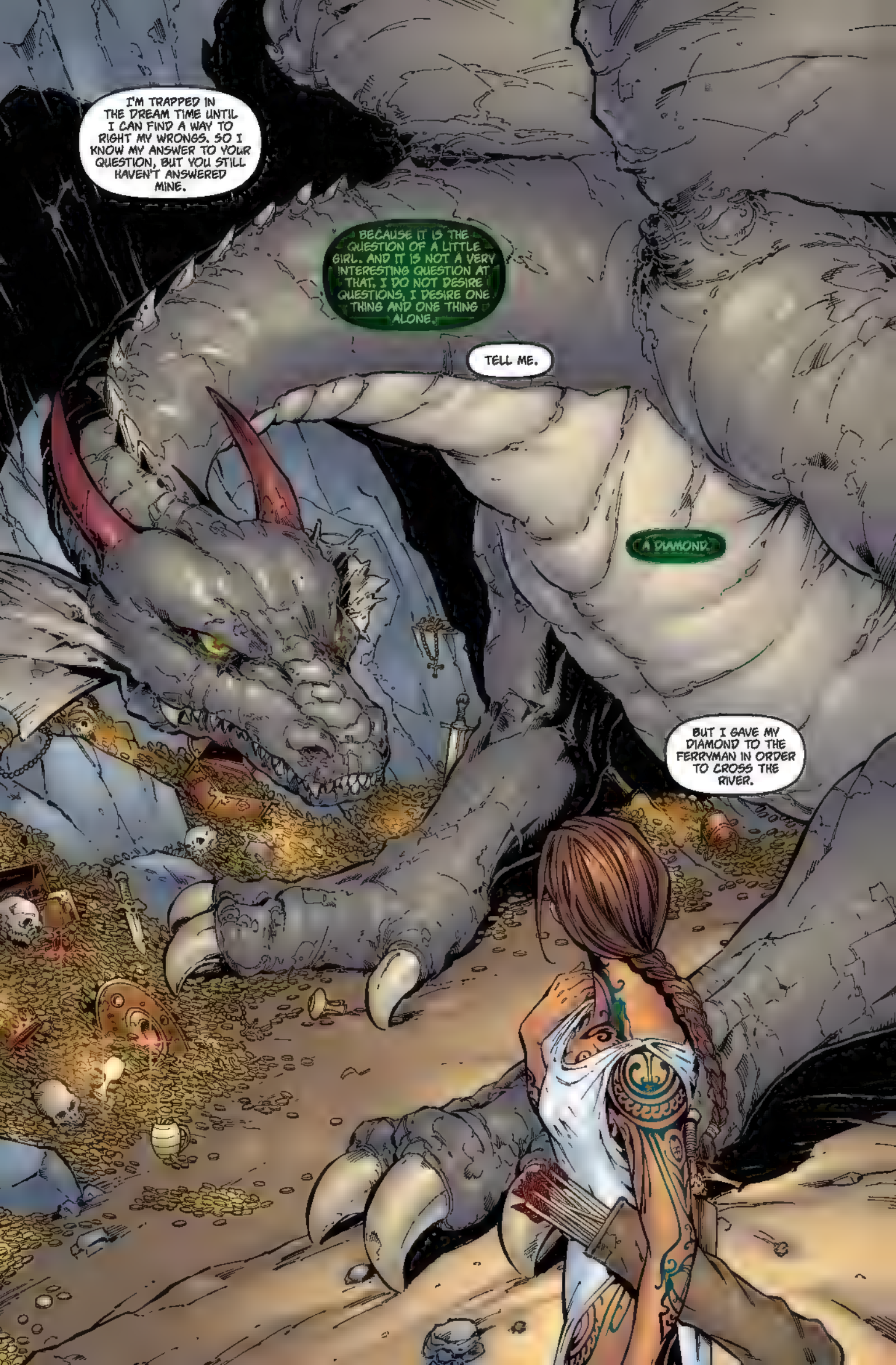

ALL JOURNEYS BEGIN WITH A SINGLE STEP. BUT THE FIRST STEP IS ALSO THE MOST DIFFICULT AND THE ONE MOST NEVER TAKE.
BECAUSE THERE THE LION WAITS. IT MIGHT BITE YOU. IT MIGHT CARRY YOU TO DISTANT LANDS. WE CANNOT PREDICT THE LION, SO WE FEAR IT.
THE LION LEAVES THE PAST IN ITS WAKE, WALKING TOWARD THE FUTURE. ONE GRACEFUL CLAW AT A TIME MAKING PRINTS AGAINST THE LAND. THE PRINTS REMAIN BEHIND AND CANNOT BE CHANGED.
THE LION WAITS. I MOUNT.

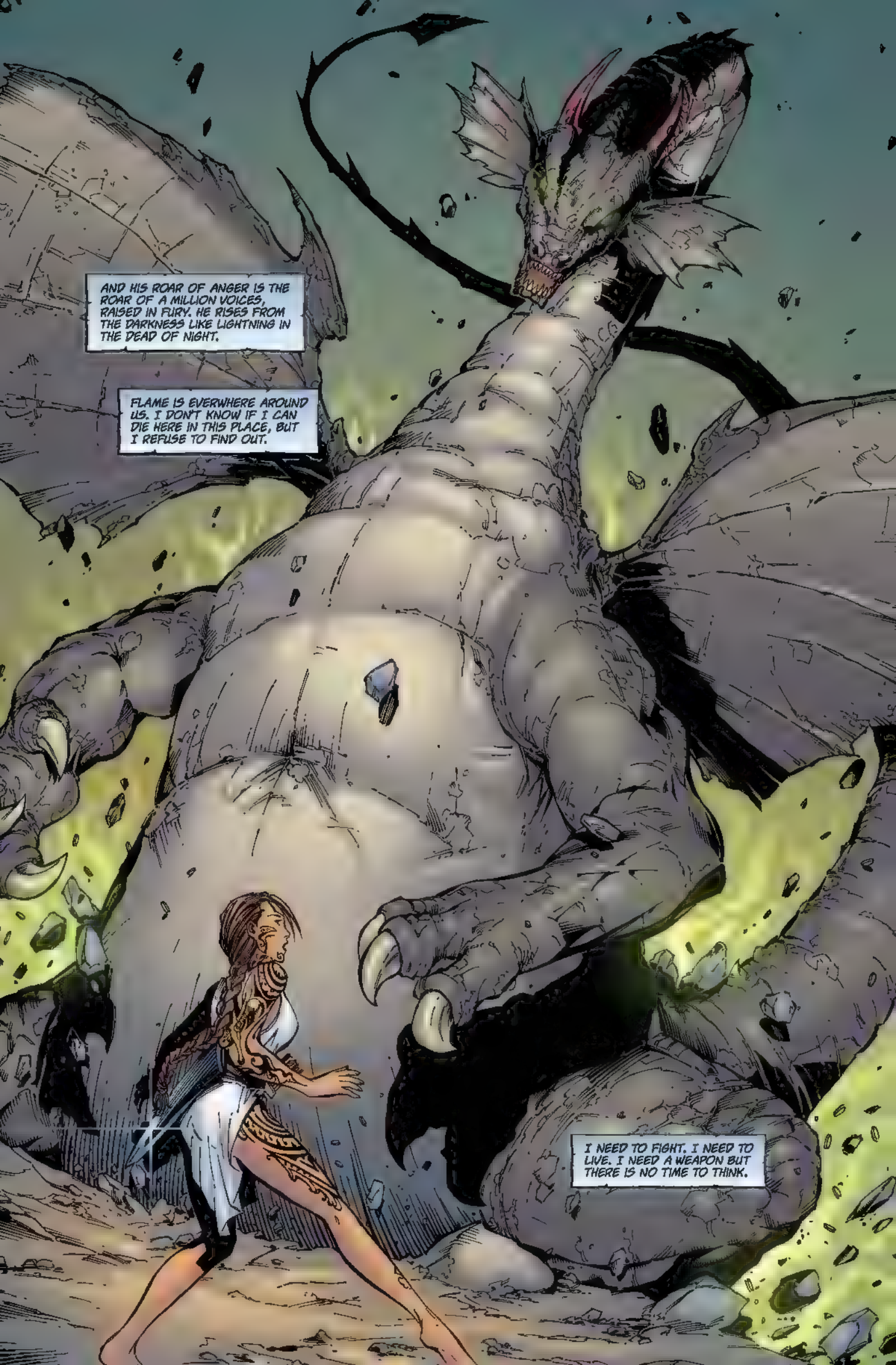
AROUND US THE FABRIC OF TIME UNWINDS IN LONG RIBBONS WITH WRINKLES AND TEARS AT THE EDGES. DAYS COULD BE HOURS, HOURS THE SPACE OF BREATHS. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL HOW LONG THE LION WALKS. ONE CAN TELL ONLY WHEN IT STOPS.
THE LOWLANDS ARE COVERED IN MIST BUT THE GREAT MOUNTAIN, WITH ITS CAVE OPENING AT THE BASE, STANDS OPEN AND ENTICING.
THE LION WHISPERS TO ME THAT SOMETHING IS WATCHING FROM WITHIN. I DO NOT QUESTION, BECAUSE THE LION NEVER LIES.
THE LION TELLS ME THAT I MUST REACH THE IVORY TOWER ON THE MOUNTAIN THAT RISES HIGH ABOVE THESE MISTY PLAINS.
AND I UNDERSTAND THAT THE RIVER IS THE KEY TO THE CAVE, BECAUSE HE IS WAITING THERE.

THE FERRYMAN WAITS FOR HIS TOLL. I TELL HIM I HAVE NOTHING. HE TELLS ME THIS KNOWLEDGE IS A START. I FIND A DIAMOND AND OTHER OBJECTS WHERE THERE WAS NOTHING BEFORE. THE DREAM PROVIDES WHAT IS NEEDED, BUT WHERE DOES THE DREAM FIND THEM?
WILL THIS DO?
YES. I WILL TAKE YOU TO THE CAVE ACROSS THE RIVER.
WHAT WAITS THERE?
THE SECOND OF YOUR FAILURES.
THEN HE TURNED AND SPOKE NOT ANOTHER WORD.

THE AIR IS COLD, THE WATER WARMER THAN IT SHOULD BE. I HEAR VOICES, CARRIED BY THE WIND.
THE FERRYMAN GLIDES HIS BOAT BACK ACROSS THE WATER. AS HE LEAVES, HE SAYS GOODBYE, THEN TURNS A LAST TIME AND SAYS HELLO.
I ASK HIM WHY.
HE SAYS, "BECAUSE WE'VE JUST BEEN INTRODUCED."
"BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM," I TELL HIM. AND HE REPLIES—
"AS IT SHOULD BE, BECAUSE NEITHER DO YOU."


I CAN FEEL THE WATCHER DEEP INSIDE HIS NEST OF SHADOWS. HIS EYES PEER OUT INTO THE WORLD, SEEING EVERYTHING AND NOTHING AT ONCE. HIS THOUGHTS ARE FREE.
AND YET HE HIMSELF IS BOUND HERE BENEATH THE MOUNTAIN.
THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO COME HERE COME OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL AND MAY LEAVE FREELY. BUT THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO STAY WILL DIE UNLESS THEY GIVE ME WHAT I DESIRE.
DO YOU DESIRE TO BE FREE?
WHO DOES NOT?
ARE YOU HELD AGAINST YOUR WILL, OR DO YOU STAY HERE OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL?
ASK YOURSELF WHY ARE YOU HERE?


I'M TRAPPED IN THE DREAM TIME UNTIL I CAN FIND A WAY TO RIGHT MY WRONGS. SO I KNOW MY ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION, BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T ANSWERED MINE.
BECAUSE IT IS THE QUESTION OF A LITTLE GIRL. AND IT IS NOT A VERY INTERESTING QUESTION AT THAT. I DO NOT DESIRE QUESTIONS, I DESIRE ONE THING AND ONE THING ALONE.
TELL ME.
A DIAMOND.
BUT I GAVE MY DIAMOND TO THE FERRYMAN IN ORDER TO CROSS THE RIVER.


AND HIS ROAR OF ANGER IS THE ROAR OF A MILLION VOICES, RAISED IN FURY. HE RISES FROM THE DARKNESS LIKE LIGHTNING IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.
FLAME IS EVERWHERE AROUND US. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DIE HERE IN THIS PLACE, BUT I REFUSE TO FIND OUT.
I NEED TO FIGHT. I NEED TO LIVE. I NEED A WEAPON BUT THERE IS NO TIME TO THINK.

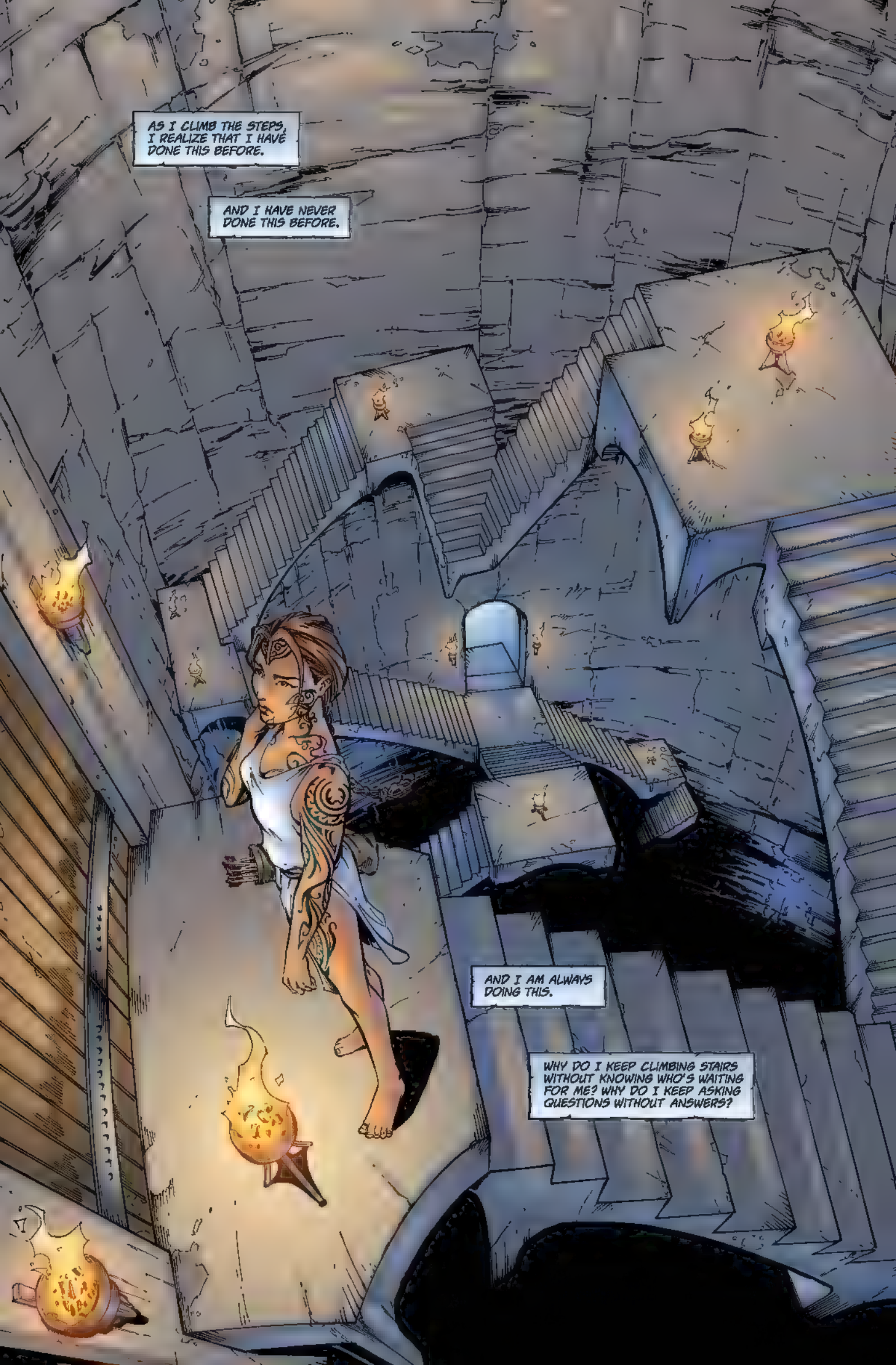
AND SUDDENLY THE SWORD IS IN MY HAND WHERE THERE WAS NOTHING A MOMENT EARLIER, THE NEXT ARTIFACT OF MY DREAM QUEST.
THE SWORD IS HOT IN MY HAND, HOTTER THAN THE FLAME, DARKER THAN SUSPICION, SHARPER THAN REGRET. TO USE IT IS TO ENDURE PAIN.
I STRIKE.

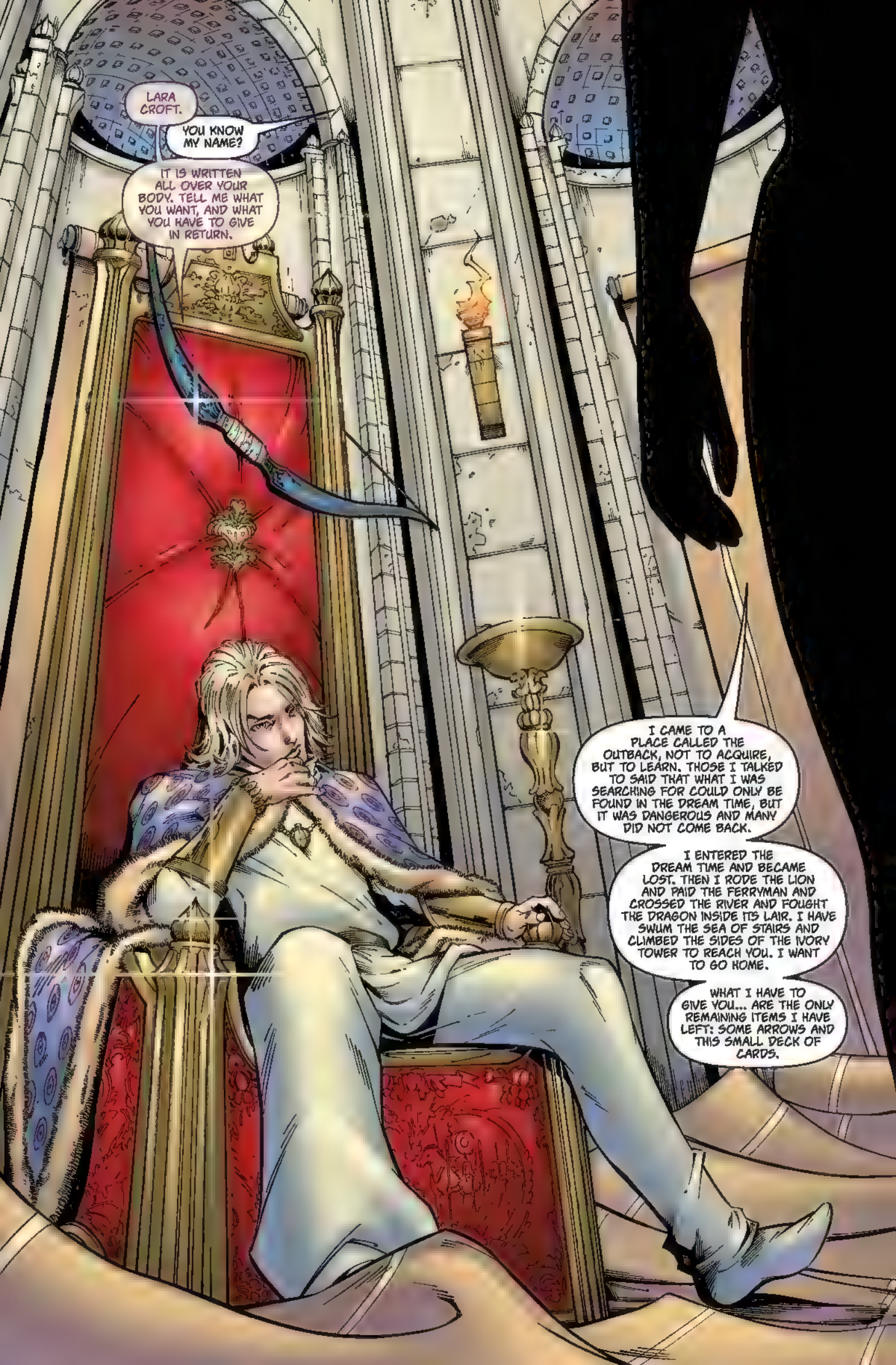
THE DRAGON'S HEART BEATS LIKE A WALTZ. AN EXPIRING TEMPO OF PAIN AND MALICE. ONE-TWO-THREE.
THE DRAGON'S HEART IS LIKE A ROSE AND UNLIKE ANY OTHER I HAVE EVER SEEN. IT UNFURLS IN FULL BLOOM AS THE TEMPO SLOWS.
ONE-TWO... THREE.
MY SWORD SHATTERS AS THE DRAGON'S HEART EXPANDS. INSIDE THERE IS A PALE GLOW AND I SEE MY REFLECTION IN THE BLOOD POOLING IN THE OPEN WOUND.
ONE... TWO... THREE.
ONE-TWO
ONE-
THE MUSIC IS GONE, LEAVING ONLY SILENCE AND BLOOD.
AND I FIND MYSELF WISHING I COULD HAVE GIVEN THE DRAGON WHAT IT DESIRED.

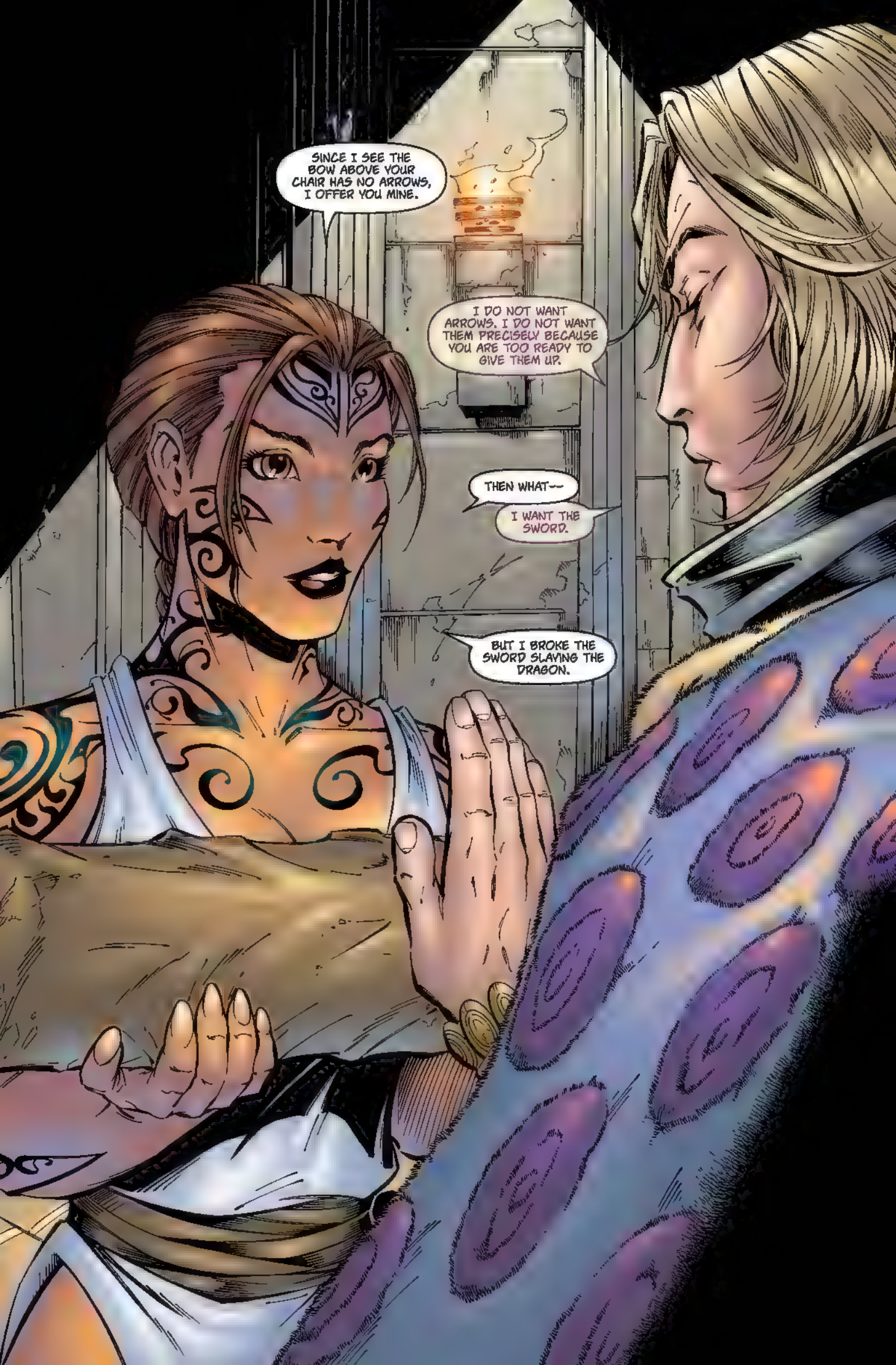
FURTHER DOWN I FIND A SMALL CHAMBER THAT IS DARKER THAN MIDNIGHT WITHOUT A MOON.
I CLIMB THE STAIRS TO THE MIDDLE OF THE CEILING TO FIND A SMALL TRAP DOOR LEADING UP INTO...
AN OCEAN. THE WATER DOES NOT POUR IN BUT HANGS SUSPENDED ABOVE MY HEAD.
THE SURF CALLS ME WITH ITS POUNDING RHYTHM. EVEN FROM BENEATH THE SEA I HEAR ITS BREATHING AND I KNOW I MUST PRESS ON.
I TAKE THE FIRST PLUNGE UPWARD--

--AND I REALIZE WITH A PANG OF SADNESS THAT THE SURF SOUNDS LIKE THE DRAGON'S HEART.
I HOLD MY BREATH, AND TRY NOT TO LISTEN.

THE IVORY TOWER RISES ABOVE ME AT LAST. THE WALLS ARE OLD, BUILT BY ANCIENT HANDS, THE LINES UNEVEN BY DESIGN. THERE ARE NO STRAIGHT LINES HERE.
FOR SOME REASON I REMEMBER A CLAY DOG I MADE WHEN I WAS FOUR, AND HOW THE LINES WERE NOT SUFFICIENTLY SMOOTH, AND REGULAR, AND NOT AS PRETTY AS THE CLAY ANIMALS MADE BY THE OTHER CHILDREN.
AND I REMEMBER HOW, IN TEARS, I SMASHED IT AND NEVER SHOWED IT TO ANYONE. BECAUSE IT WAS IMPERFECT.
AS I REALIZE THAT THIS PLACE WAS MADE IRREGULARLY BY DESIGN, BY MAKERS WHO WERE PROUD OF ITS ECCENTRICITY. I FEEL ODDLY ASHAMED.


AS I CLIMB THE STEPS, I REALIZE THAT I HAVE DONE THIS BEFORE.
AND I HAVE NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE.
AND I AM ALWAYS DOING THIS.
WHY DO I KEEP CLIMBING STAIRS WITHOUT KNOWING WHO'S WAITING FOR ME? WHY DO I KEEP ASKING QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS?


LARA CROFT.
YOU KNOW MY NAME?
IT IS WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR BODY. TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT, AND WHAT YOU HAVE TO GIVE IN RETURN.
I CAME TO A PLACE CALLED THE OUTBACK, NOT TO ACQUIRE, BUT TO LEARN. THOSE I TALKED TO SAID THAT WHAT I WAS SEARCHING FOR COULD ONLY BE FOUND IN THE DREAM TIME, BUT IT WAS DANGEROUS AND MANY DID NOT COME BACK.
I ENTERED THE DREAM TIME AND BECAME LOST. THEN I RODE THE LION AND PAID THE FERRYMAN AND CROSSED THE RIVER AND FOUGHT THE DRAGON INSIDE ITS LAIR. I HAVE SWUM THE SEA OF STAIRS AND CLIMBED THE SIDES OF THE IVORY TOWER TO REACH YOU. I WANT TO GO HOME.
WHAT I HAVE TO GIVE YOU... ARE THE ONLY REMAINING ITEMS I HAVE LEFT: SOME ARROWS AND THIS SMALL DECK OF CARDS.

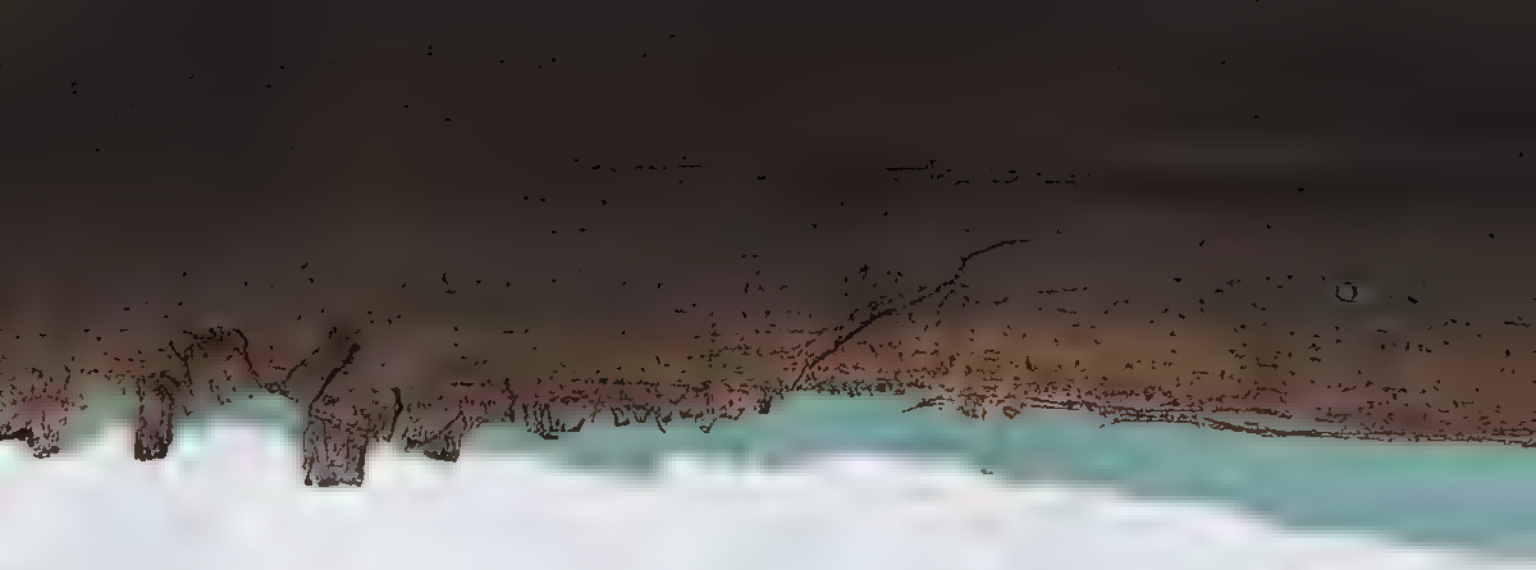

SINCE I SEE THE BOW ABOVE YOUR CHAIR HAS NO ARROWS, I OFFER YOU MINE.
I DO NOT WANT ARROWS. I DO NOT WANT THEM PRECISELY BECAUSE YOU ARE TOO READY TO GIVE THEM UP.
THEN WHAT—
I WANT THE SWORD.
BUT I BROKE THE SWORD SLAYING THE DRAGON.

YOU BROKE THE SWORD BY SLAYING THE DRAGON BECAUSE YOU PAID THE FERRYMAN WITH THE DIAMOND THAT THE DRAGON DESIRED.
IT WAS NECESSARY.
WAS IT?
HOW MANY THINGS IN YOUR LIFE HAVE YOU LEFT BEHIND OR THROWN AWAY WHEN YOU COULD HAVE SPARED THEM?
DID YOU THROW AWAY LOVE BECAUSE IT WAS NECESSARY, OR BECAUSE IT WAS CONVENIENT?
DID YOU THROW AWAY FRIENDSHIP BECAUSE IT WAS NECESSARY, OR BECAUSE IT WAS CONVENIENT?
IS WHAT YOU ACHIEVED EQUAL TO WHAT YOU HAVE LOST? THIS IS THE QUESTION THAT DREW YOU HERE, THE QUESTION YOU COULD NOT SPEAK ALOUD, COULD SPEAK ONLY IN THE LANGUAGE OF DREAM.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEFT BEHIND BINDS YOU TO WHO YOU WERE, AND WHO YOU ARE, AS THE THINGS YOU THREW AWAY BIND YOU TO THIS PLACE. THIS IS YOUR THIRD FAILURE, FATHER TO THE REST. THIS IS ALWAYS YOUR FAILURE.
IS THERE ANY HOPE TO MAKE IT RIGHT?
THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE. YOU STILL HAVE ONE CHANCE TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT AGAIN.
THEN I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO...

I LET THE CARDS AND MY MISTAKES FALL AWAY FROM ME. I CARRIED THEM WITH ME WHEN THOSE WERE THE FIRST THINGS I SHOULD HAVE GIVEN AWAY.
SHOULD HAVE LET THE FERRYMAN DROP THEM IN THE WATER TO FLOAT AWAY, OR LET THE DRAGON BURN THEM.
I WAS BOUND TO MY MISTAKES AND MY REGRETS AS THE DRAGON WAS CRUSHED UNDER THE WEIGHT OF HIS MOUNTAIN AND HIS GOLD.
SO MANY NIGHTS I WOULD AWAKEN IN THE DARK AND STARE AT THE CEILING, AND WATCH AS THE MOUNTAIN OF MY REGRETS SLOWLY COVERED ME, AS I RELIVED EVERY CONVERSATION THAT HAD GONE WRONG, EVERY LOVE THAT HAD GONE AWAY, AND WONDER WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.
WHAT IS, IS.
SO I LET IT ALL GO, IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT TONIGHT, I WILL SLEEP PEACEFULLY UNTIL DAWN, AND I WILL NOT REGRET.
BUT I WILL DREAM.
BECAUSE I AM THE LION.
THE END.

TAN 02



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VAL STAPLES, AND TYSON WENGLER**

LETTERS
**DREAMER DESIGN, ROBIN SPEHAR,
AND DENNIS HEISLER**

COVER ART
BILLY TAN

AFTER SEVERAL DAYS TREKKING THROUGH THE BRUSH OF NEW ZEALAND, I FINALLY CAME ACROSS THE LOCATION OF THE MAORI TRIBE THAT HAS BEEN SECRETED AWAY FROM SOCIETY FOR CENTURIES.

ONE OF THE MOST DIGNIFIED AND AMAZING CULTURES I HAVE EVER PERSONALLY WITNESSED.
THEY WERE, WITHOUT FAIL, A KIND, GENEROUS AND MYSTICAL PEOPLE.

THEY TOOK ME IMMEDIATELY TO THEIR COUNSEL OF ELDERS.
I TOLD THEM ABOUT THE DREAM SPEAR AND MY QUEST TO FIND IT, BOTH FOR MY PEOPLE WHO LOST IT WHEN WE SWORE TO PROTECT IT, AND FOR THEIR OWN PEOPLE.

I WILL FIND WHO HAS STOLEN THE DREAM SPEAR.
THAT IS THE MAN WHO HOLDS THE DREAM SPEAR IN THE UNDERWORLD.
I KNOW THAT MAN! THAT'S MR. KAGAN!
IT'S VERY DANGEROUS FOR HIM TO BE WHERE HE IS AND IN POSSESSION OF THE SPEAR...

THIS GUY NEVER GIVES ME A BREAK. AND I STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT IF IT REALLY WAS HIM THAT I RAN INTO ON THE DORA DEL SOL OR NOT. THAT WHOLE EXPERIENCE WAS A QUESTIONABLE ONE.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE SPEAR IS NOT RETURNED?
WHOEVER HAS POSSESSION OF THE SPEAR COULD BRING BACK THE DEAD AND DESTROY THE DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN THE DREAMING UNDERWORLD AND REALITY.
THEN I'LL HAVE TO GO IN THERE AND RECAPTURE IT FOR YOU. I CAN DO IT. I'VE HAD EXPERIENCE IN THIS SORT OF THING BEFORE.
WE CANNOT LET YOU GO.
IT WAS YOUR PEOPLE WHO LOST THE SPEAR IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND ONE OF YOUR KIND IS CARRYING IT WITHOUT OUR PERMISSION, DESTROYING THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE DREAMING WORLD AND THE REAL WORLD.
YOU DO NOT REPRESENT THE TRIBE.
I'M WILLING TO TAKE THE RISK AND THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY PEOPLE, SO THAT YOU MAY NOT ENDANGER YOURSELVES FOR A MISTAKE WE CAUSED. PLEASE. I'M WILLING TO GO.

THERE IS A WAY IN WHICH SHE CAN ENTER THE DREAMING OF THE UNDERWORLD AND NOT COMPROMISE THE LAWS OF OUR PEOPLE.
NO, I KNOW WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE HER DO, AND IT'S TOO RISKY.
SHE SAID SHE IS WILLING TO ACCEPT THE RISKS.
IT SIMPLY ISN'T DONE.
WHAT ISN'T DONE? WHAT RISKS?
WE WOULD HAVE TO GIVE YOU A MOKO ALL OVER YOUR BODY.
A... MOKO? YOU MEAN A TATTOO LIKE THE ONES ON YOUR FACES?
YES. IT WOULD TRANSPORT YOU INTO THE DREAMING FOR... A LIMITED TIME.

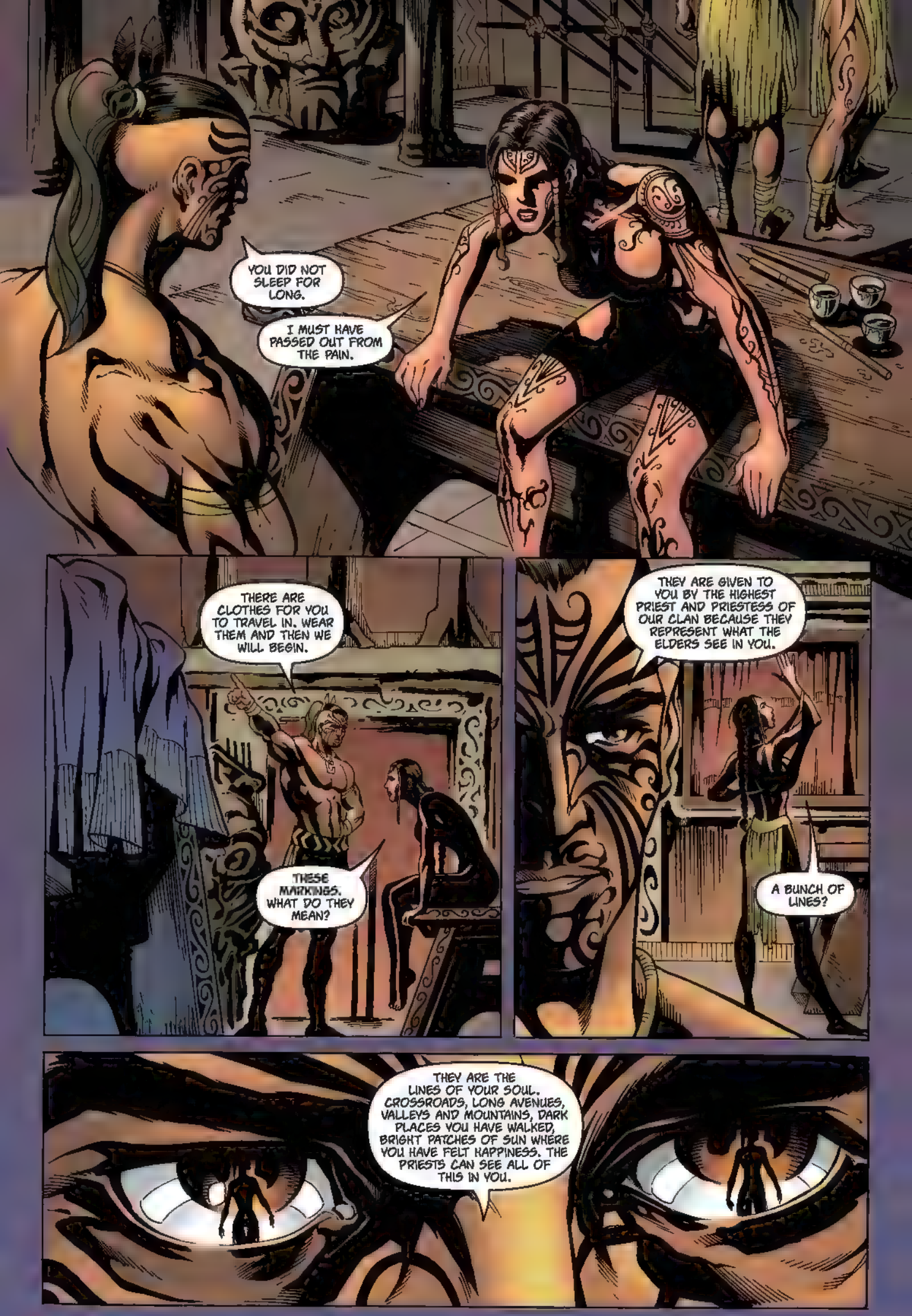
WE CANNOT LET HER GO, AKIO.
SHE IS NOT A PART OF THE TRIBE NO MATTER HOW TRUE HER MOTIVATIONS ARE FOR BRINGING BACK THE SPEAR.
LISTEN TO ME--
SHE SAID SHE IS WILLING TO ACCEPT THE RISKS.
AKIO, I KNOW WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE HER DO, AND IT'S TOO RISKY.
IT SIMPLY ISN'T DONE.
IF SHE WINS BY RIGHT OF COMBAT, I OFFER TO BE HER GUIDE.
WHO AM I TO FIGHT?
ME.
WE DO NOT APPROVE OF A STRANGER GOING AFTER--
BY THE LAWS OF OUR PEOPLE, SHE WILL BE ONE OF OUR TRIBE IF SHE CAN BEST ITS GREATEST WARRIOR IN BATTLE AND IF SHE BEARS THE MOKO. YOU CANNOT ARGUE WITH YOUR OWN LAWS.
I CHALLENGE YOU.
I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU.
YOU MUST OVERPOWER ME IF YOU WISH TO BECOME PART OF THE TRIBE AND WIN THE SPEAR.
I REFUSE TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH.

CRACK!
WHAM!
WHAM!
WHAM!

THOK!
I MADE A PROMISE ONCE. AND I NEVER GO BACK ON PROMISES.
I WILL NOT FIGHT YOU TO THE DEATH. YOU WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT THIS AS YOUR DEFEAT.
I HAVE LOST.
I WILL GUIDE HER THROUGH THE UNDERWORLD. WE WILL GIVE HER THE MOKO, THE MARK OF THE DREAMING, AND ALTHOUGH IT WILL NOT LAST, IT WILL PROVIDE ENOUGH TIME TO FIND THE SPEAR AND RETURN IT.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, A LIMITED TIME?
THE MOKO WE CAN GIVE OUTSIDERS WILL LAST ONLY A LIMITED TIME. IF YOU DO NOT RETURN FROM THE DREAMING, THEN YOU WILL BE STUCK IN THE UNDERWORLD FOREVER.
HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN MY TIME IS UP?
I VOLUNTEER TO GUIDE YOU.

"TOGETHER WE WILL HAVE THE CHANCE TO RECLAIM THE DREAM SPEAR AND RETURN TO THE MORTAL WORLD."
I ACCEPTED THEIR TERMS AND ALL THE PAIN THAT WENT WITH THEM.


YOU DID NOT SLEEP FOR LONG.
I MUST HAVE PASSED OUT FROM THE PAIN.
THERE ARE CLOTHES FOR YOU TO TRAVEL IN. WEAR THEM AND THEN WE WILL BEGIN.
THESE MARKINGS. WHAT DO THEY MEAN?
THEY ARE GIVEN TO YOU BY THE HIGHEST PRIEST AND PRIESTESS OF OUR CLAN BECAUSE THEY REPRESENT WHAT THE ELDERS SEE IN YOU.
A BUNCH OF LINES?
THEY ARE THE LINES OF YOUR SOUL. CROSSROADS, LONG AVENUES, VALLEYS AND MOUNTAINS, DARK PLACES YOU HAVE WALKED, BRIGHT PATCHES OF SUN WHERE YOU HAVE FELT HAPPINESS. THE PRIESTS CAN SEE ALL OF THIS IN YOU.

I'M READY TO BEGIN THE JOURNEY.
WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME.
THE MOKO ON YOUR BODY WILL SLOWLY FADE.
IF YOU DO NOT HURRY AND RETRIEVE THE SPEAR, THERE IS A CHANCE YOU WILL BE LOST TO THE DREAMING UNDERWORLD FOREVER.
FOLLOW ME.
I... FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE. BUT THAT CAN'T BE POSSIBLE.
YOU ARE REMEMBERING THE FUTURE.
REMEMBERING... THE FUTURE?
YES. IT WILL HAPPEN OFTEN HERE.

OUR BODIES WILL PASS THROUGH BOTH WORLDS.
IS THIS WHAT'S HAPPENING TO KAGAN?
NO, THE SPEAR IS VERY SPECIAL. KAGAN'S BODY HAD COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED FROM THE WAKING WORLD. HE EXISTS ONLY IN THE DREAMING NOW.
BUT WE CAN STILL CATCH HIM, RIGHT?
IF WE HURRY.

THERE WAS NO SENSE OF DAYS PASSING IN THE DREAMING OF THE UNDERWORLD. HERE THE SKY WAS ALWAYS A PALE SHADE OF GREEN AND I WAS NEITHER TIRED NOR AWAKE.
AKIO HAD THE SKILL OF A WISEMAN IN SUCH A YOUTHFUL BODY. HE ASKED MANY SPIRITS IF THEY HAD SEEN THE DREAM SPEAR OF THE MAORI TRIBE.
SOME SPIRITS COULD BE OF NO HELP, OTHERS HELPED BY SIMPLY POINTING THE WAY. A WAY THAT LED ON INTO INFINITY, IT SEEMED.
I COULD HAVE FOLLOWED AKIO FOR HOURS WITHOUT FATIGUE. I FELT NO HUNGER OR PAIN, EVEN WHEN THINGS GOT DANGEROUS.
AND THEY DID, ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
WHY DO YOU THINK KAGAN STOLE THE DREAM SPEAR, AKIO?
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOUR PEOPLE WOULD WANT WITH IT.
YOU KNOW HIM, DON'T YOU?
SORT OF. WE HAVE CROSSED PATHS ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION. SOMETHING INSIDE ME FEELS PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT'S HAPPENING.
WHY?
WHEN I LAST SAW KAGAN, I LEFT THINGS... UNRESOLVED.

HAD I BEEN MORE RESPONSIBLE ABOUT MY POSITION, THINGS MIGHT HAVE TURNED OUT DIFFERENTLY.
INSTEAD IT SEEMS I LEFT HIM ONLY TO FIND HE'D GONE ON TO COMMIT ANOTHER CRIME.
SO, I FEEL PARTLY RESPONSIBLE SOMEHOW.
YOU LEFT HIM BEHIND AND WALKED AWAY.
YEAH.
AKIO, SOMETHING ELSE HAS BEEN TROUBLING ME SINCE WE ARRIVED IN THE DREAMING UNDERWORLD. I FEEL AS IF...
AS IF SOMEHOW I'VE MET YOU BEFORE. I FEEL LIKE I KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN BEFORE IT HAPPENS.

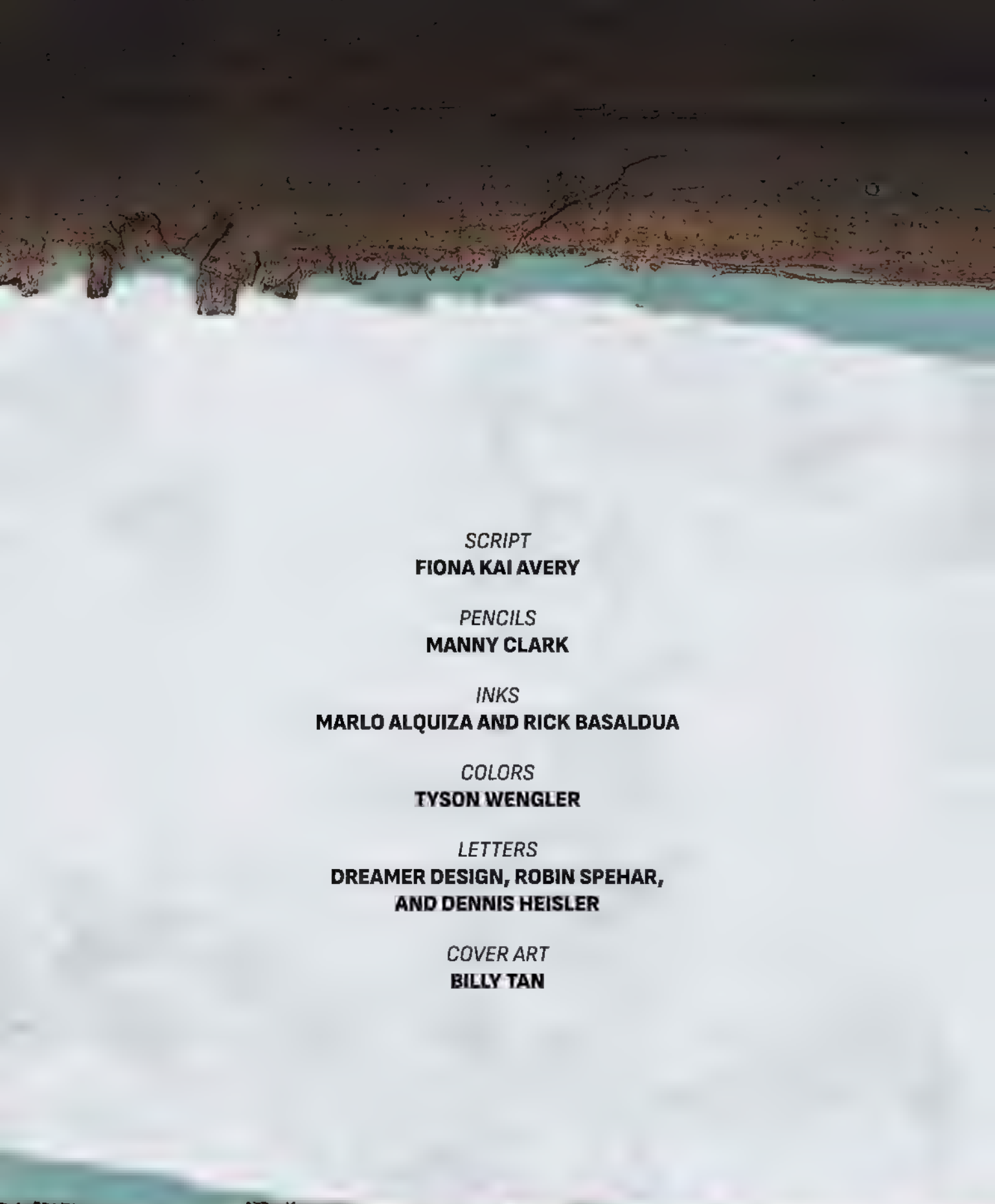
THEN WHEN I TRY AND ANTICIPATE THE FUTURE, IT'S LIKE TRYING TO HOLD A SLIVER OF ICE IN MY PALM.
THIS WORLD OF DREAMING DOES NOT HOLD ONTO TIME. IF YOU CONSIDER BEFORE, AFTER AND PRESENT TOO CLOSELY, THE LINES WILL BECOME BLURRED.
IT'S BEST NOT TO THINK OF SUCH THINGS IF YOU WISH TO STAY SANE.
WHAT'S THAT?
STAY HERE. I'LL SEE.
NO, I'M COMING WITH YOU.
DO YOU KNOW THEM?
NO. BUT THEY MAY HELP US FIND THE SPEAR.
THEY DON'T LOOK VERY APPROACHABLE.
EVEN ENEMIES CAN BE HELPFUL. THE SPEAR IS ALL THAT MATTERS.

WHO ARE YOU?
NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS. YOU HAVE NO AUTHORITY HERE.
IF YOU DO NOT STATE YOUR NAME OR TRIBE THEN I WILL RIP THE INFORMATION FROM YOU PIECE BY PIECE.
CHUMP

SMACK
SWOOSH

NO WAIT, AKIO!
MYLES? HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE??
LARA??
IT IS YOU... MYLES!
TO BE CONTINUED...

JOURNEYS PART 10
TAN 02



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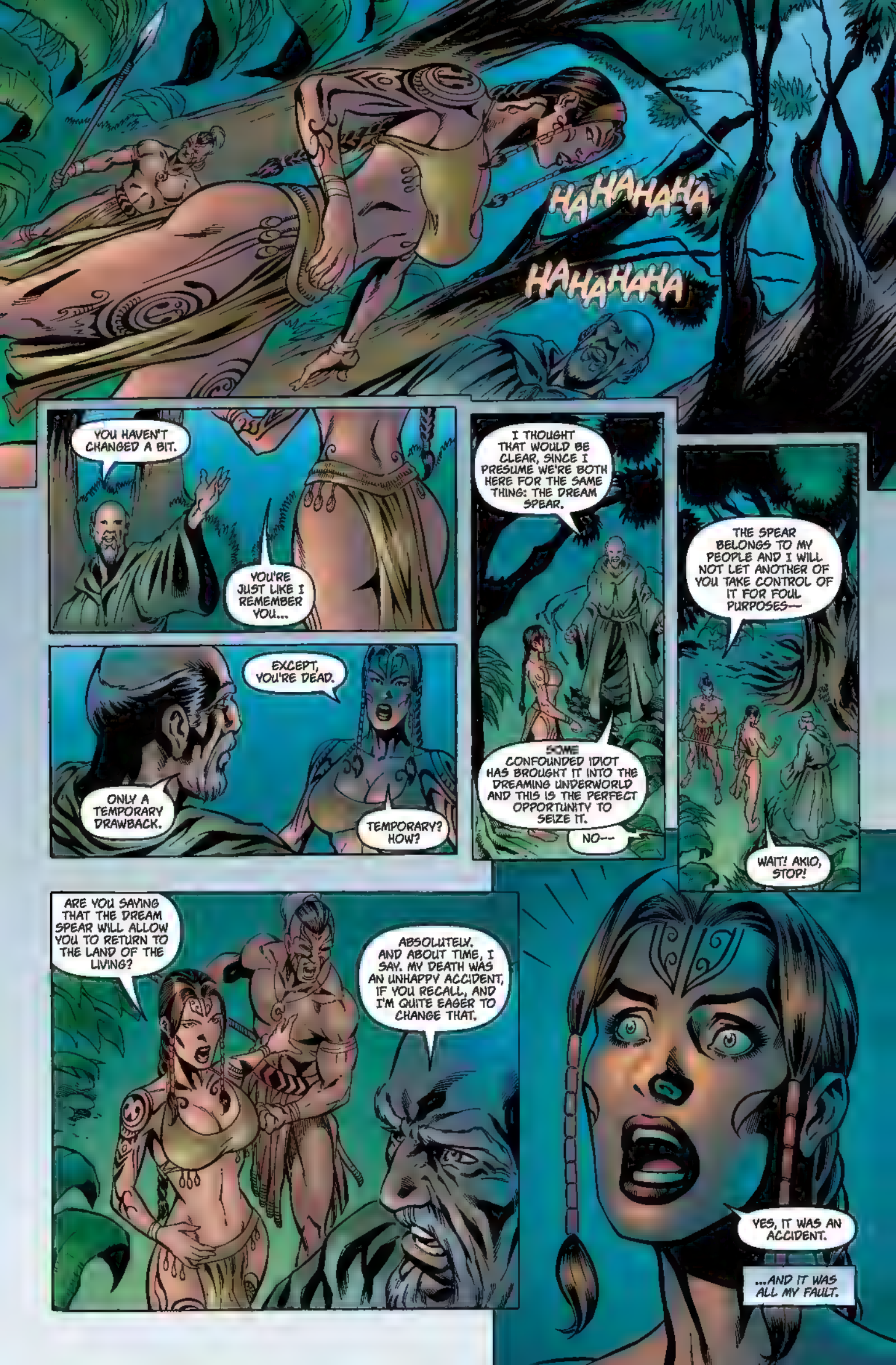
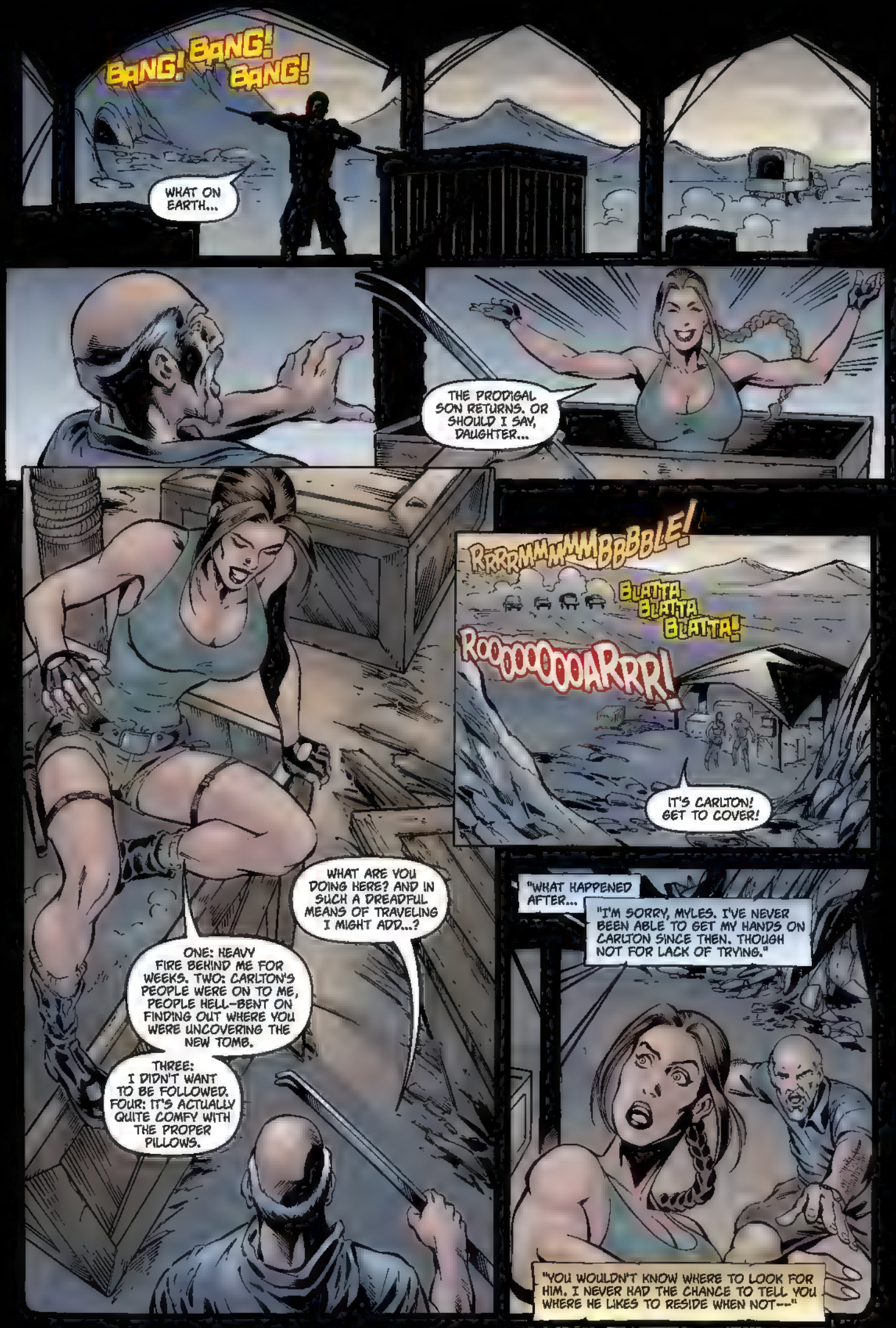
NO WAIT, AKIO!
MYLES? IT CAN'T BE YOU.
YOU DIED THERE IN MY ARMS, IN THE MIDDLE OF A GODFORSAKEN WASTELAND...
SO HOW CAN THIS BE?
LARA??
IT REALLY IS YOU...
IT'S HIS VOICE. HIS FACE. BUT I'VE BEEN TRICKED BEFORE BY SPIRITS AND STRANGE ANCIENT RUINS. I WASN'T ABOUT TO LET MY GUARD DOWN IMMEDIATELY...

GOOD LORD, GIRL. LOOK AT YOU. HAVE YOU GONE NATIVE?
AND WHERE IS MY GUN? I LEFT IT WITH YOU FOR SAFE KEEPING AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE DECENCY TO BRING IT BACK TO ME IN THE UNDERWORLD.
I HAVE NOT GONE NATIVE! AKIO TOLD ME THAT THIS WAS THE ONLY MEANS FOR SOMEONE STILL ALIVE TO TRAVEL IN THE DREAMING UNDERWORLD.
WELL, THE LEAST YOU COULD HAVE DONE WAS—
YOU KNOW, THE REASON I LEFT YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE WAS BECAUSE I WANTED TO DO THINGS ON MY OWN, BECAUSE YOU NEVER APPRECIATED A THING THAT I DID. IF YOU WERE SLIGHTLY MORE—
YOU LEFT? I LEFT.
NO, I LEFT FIRST. YOU ALWAYS CLAIMED OTHERWISE.
BUT IN FACT—!!


HAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHA
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT.
YOU'RE JUST LIKE I REMEMBER YOU...
EXCEPT, YOU'RE DEAD.
ONLY A TEMPORARY DRAWBACK.
TEMPORARY? HOW?
I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE CLEAR, SINCE I PRESUME WE'RE BOTH HERE FOR THE SAME THING: THE DREAM SPEAR.
SOME CONFOUNDED IDIOT HAS BROUGHT IT INTO THE DREAMING UNDERWORLD AND THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO SEIZE IT.
NO--
THE SPEAR BELONGS TO MY PEOPLE AND I WILL NOT LET ANOTHER OF YOU TAKE CONTROL OF IT FOR FOUL PURPOSES—
WAIT! AKIO, STOP!
ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE DREAM SPEAR WILL ALLOW YOU TO RETURN TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING?
ABSOLUTELY. AND ABOUT TIME, I SAY. MY DEATH WAS AN UNHAPPY ACCIDENT, IF YOU RECALL, AND I'M QUITE EAGER TO CHANGE THAT.
YES, IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
...AND IT WAS ALL MY FAULT.

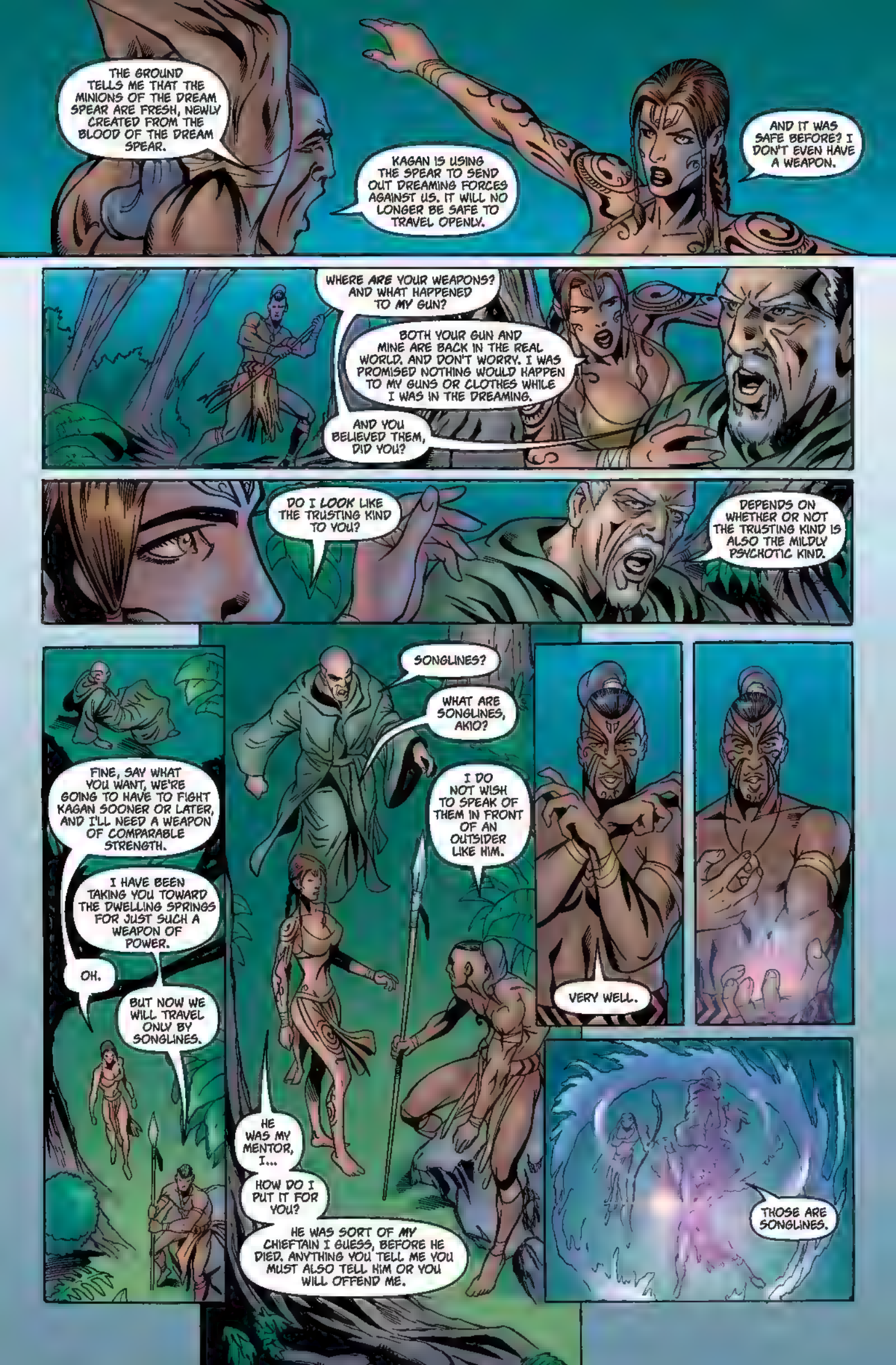

BANG! BANG! BANG!
WHAT ON EARTH...
THE PRODIGAL SON RETURNS. OR SHOULD I SAY, DAUGHTER...
RRRRMMMMMMBBBBLE!
BLATTA BLATTA BLATTA!
ROOOOOOOOARRRR!
IT'S CARLTON! GET TO COVER!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? AND IN SUCH A DREADFUL MEANS OF TRAVELING I MIGHT ADD...?
ONE: HEAVY FIRE BEHIND ME FOR WEEKS. TWO: CARLTON'S PEOPLE WERE ON TO ME, PEOPLE HELL-BENT ON FINDING OUT WHERE YOU WERE UNCOVERING THE NEW TOMB.
THREE: I DIDN'T WANT TO BE FOLLOWED. FOUR: IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE COMFY WITH THE PROPER PILLOWS.
"WHAT HAPPENED AFTER...
"I'M SORRY, MYLES. I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO GET MY HANDS ON CARLTON SINCE THEN. THOUGH NOT FOR LACK OF TRYING."
"YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FOR HIM. I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO TELL YOU WHERE HE LIKES TO RESIDE WHEN NOT---"

WHAT IN BLOODY HELL—?
YOU TALK TOO MUCH, TOO CLOSE TO DANGER. DANGER HEARS YOU.
GET BEHIND ME! THEY'RE MINIONS OF THE DREAM SPEAR!
I'LL TAKE THESE IF YOU CAN HANDLE ALL THOSE.
WAK
IT'S MORE LIKELY I'LL BE NEEDED TO DISPOSE OF YOURS.
WAK
WELL, THIS IS NEW AND UNPLEASANT. THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NOTHING I CAN DO WITHOUT A WEAPON LIKE AKIO'S SPEAR OR MYLES' SWORD.
WONDER WHERE HE GOT THAT SWORD ANYWAY.

SUUP
WAK
SSSSUUUPP
EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?
THAT... WILL BE... ENOUGH!
WAK
FINE. USELESS, BUT FINE.

INTERESTING... THE GROUND IS MOIST WHERE THEY FELL.
HUH... THEY MUST HAVE BEEN RATTLED.
MYLES, WHERE DID YOU GET THAT SWORD? I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.
THERE'S MUCH YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS PLACE. AND TOO MUCH TO TRY AND TELL YOU IN THE SHORT TIME YOU HAVE TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR MISSION HERE.
THAT ISN'T AN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION. IF YOU MANAGED TO FIND SOMETHING HERE TO FIGHT WITH, THEN I--
I KNOW WHERE YOU'RE HEADING WITH THIS ARGUMENT, AND I'M NOT SURE YOU'RE READY FOR THAT YET.
I NEVER COULD GET ANYTHING OUT OF YOU WITHOUT A FIGHT.

TELL THE WOMAN WHAT SHE WISHES, OLD DEAD MAN, OR I WILL DESTROY YOU ON THE SPOT.
NO, AKIO. THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
WAK
I'VE HAD JUST ENOUGH INSULTS FROM YOU. EVEN IF I AM EVER-LASTING AS A GHOST, MY PATIENCE IS STILL SLIVER THIN.
STOP IT! I NEED AKIO AS A GUIDE!
SMACK!
AKIO!
STOP IT! I COMMAND YOU BOTH TO CEASE THIS SENSELESS FIGHTING. THERE ARE FAR MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER—
—WHAT WERE THOSE SPIRITS COMING AFTER US?


THE GROUND TELLS ME THAT THE MINIONS OF THE DREAM SPEAR ARE FRESH, NEWLY CREATED FROM THE BLOOD OF THE DREAM SPEAR.
KAGAN IS USING THE SPEAR TO SEND OUT DREAMING FORCES AGAINST US. IT WILL NO LONGER BE SAFE TO TRAVEL OPENLY.
AND IT WAS SAFE BEFORE? I DON'T EVEN HAVE A WEAPON.
WHERE ARE YOUR WEAPONS? AND WHAT HAPPENED TO MY GUN?
BOTH YOUR GUN AND MINE ARE BACK IN THE REAL WORLD. AND DON'T WORRY. I WAS PROMISED NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN TO MY GUNS OR CLOTHES WHILE I WAS IN THE DREAMING.
AND YOU BELIEVED THEM, DID YOU?
DO I LOOK LIKE THE TRUSTING KIND TO YOU?
DEPENDS ON WHETHER OR NOT THE TRUSTING KIND IS ALSO THE MILDLY PSYCHOTIC KIND.
SONGLINES?
WHAT ARE SONGLINES, AKIO?
I DO NOT WISH TO SPEAK OF THEM IN FRONT OF AN OUTSIDER LIKE HIM.
VERY WELL.
FINE, SAY WHAT YOU WANT, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIGHT KAGAN SOONER OR LATER, AND I'LL NEED A WEAPON OF COMPARABLE STRENGTH.
I HAVE BEEN TAKING YOU TOWARD THE DWELLING SPRINGS FOR JUST SUCH A WEAPON OF POWER.
OH.
BUT NOW WE WILL TRAVEL ONLY BY SONGLINES.
HE WAS MY MENTOR, I...
HOW DO I PUT IT FOR YOU?
HE WAS SORT OF MY CHIEFTAIN I GUESS, BEFORE HE DIED. ANYTHING YOU TELL ME YOU MUST ALSO TELL HIM OR YOU WILL OFFEND ME.
THOSE ARE SONGLINES.

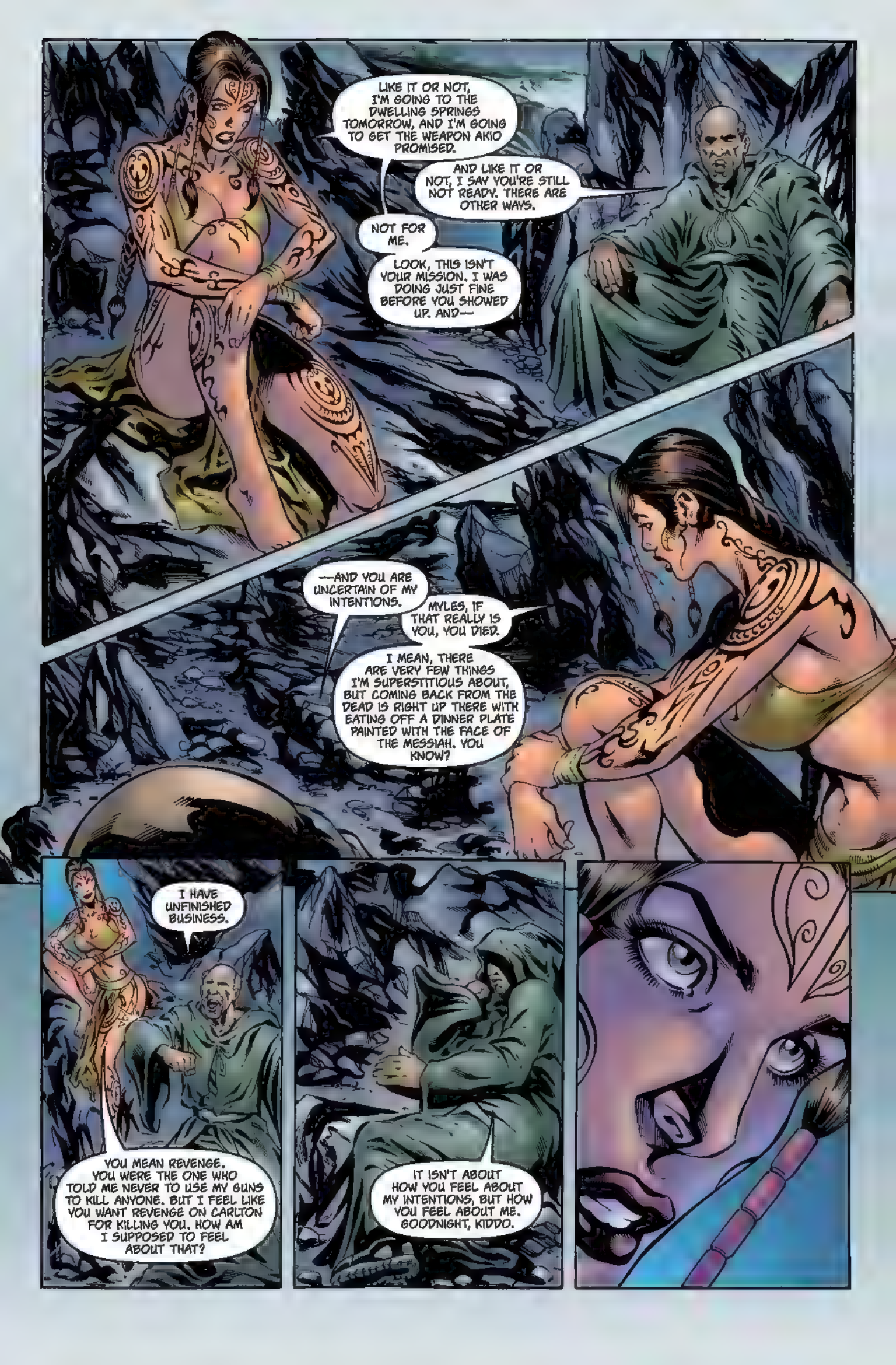
THE FIRE BURNS COLD, A BLUE FIRE THAT MAKES THE HAIR ON MY ARMS STAND UP. THEY WHISPER TO EACH OTHER, TO ME, TO US.

THE VOICES OF THE EARTH, TURNED TO CONTEMPLATING, INTERLOCKING IN A QUEST FOR PERFECTION, FOR HARMONY.

THE SONGS OF THE EARTH THAT ONLY THE SOIL KNOWS, ONLY THE SHAMANS CAN SING. OLD SONGS. OLD EARTH.

I SHUT IT OUT, KNOWING THAT IF I DON'T, MY SOUL WILL BECOME PART OF THE SONG.

BUT I WONDER WOULD THAT REALLY BE SUCH A BAD THING?


LIKE IT OR NOT, I'M GOING TO THE DWELLING SPRINGS TOMORROW, AND I'M GOING TO GET THE WEAPON AKIO PROMISED.
AND LIKE IT OR NOT, I SAY YOU'RE STILL NOT READY. THERE ARE OTHER WAYS.
NOT FOR ME.
LOOK, THIS ISN'T YOUR MISSION. I WAS DOING JUST FINE BEFORE YOU SHOWED UP. AND—
—AND YOU ARE UNCERTAIN OF MY INTENTIONS.
MYLES, IF THAT REALLY IS YOU, YOU DIED.
I MEAN, THERE ARE VERY FEW THINGS I'M SUPERSTITIOUS ABOUT, BUT COMING BACK FROM THE DEAD IS RIGHT UP THERE WITH EATING OFF A DINNER PLATE PAINTED WITH THE FACE OF THE MESSIAH. YOU KNOW?
I HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS.
YOU MEAN REVENGE. YOU WERE THE ONE WHO TOLD ME NEVER TO USE MY GUNS TO KILL ANYONE. BUT I FEEL LIKE YOU WANT REVENGE ON CARLTON FOR KILLING YOU. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FEEL ABOUT THAT?
IT ISN'T ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT MY INTENTIONS, BUT HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT ME. GOODNIGHT, KIDDO.

I CANNOT LEAD YOU THE REST OF THE WAY TO YOUR DESTINY WEAPON. IT'S THE ONE THING FORBIDDEN OF ME. THE WEAPON WILL ONLY SPEAK TO THE ONE IT BONDS WITH.
I UNDERSTAND.
STILL, YOU MUST KNOW ONE THING. IF AT THE CRITICAL TIME, YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN BETRAYED, YOU MUST NOT RELY ON YOUR OWN SENSES. YOU MUST RELY ON FAITH ALONE. THIS IS A WORLD THAT OPERATES FROM THE HEART, NOT THE MIND.
I DIDN'T FULLY UNDERSTAND HIS WORDS, BUT I THANKED AKIO FOR HIS ADVICE AND CONTINUED ON MY OWN, FOLLOWING THE SONGLINES OF HIS ANCESTORS, TO MY DESTINY.

SWISH SWISH SWISH
SWISH SWISH
WHS WHS WHS WHS WHS
WHS WHS WHS WHS

CRACK!

THUMP
THAP!

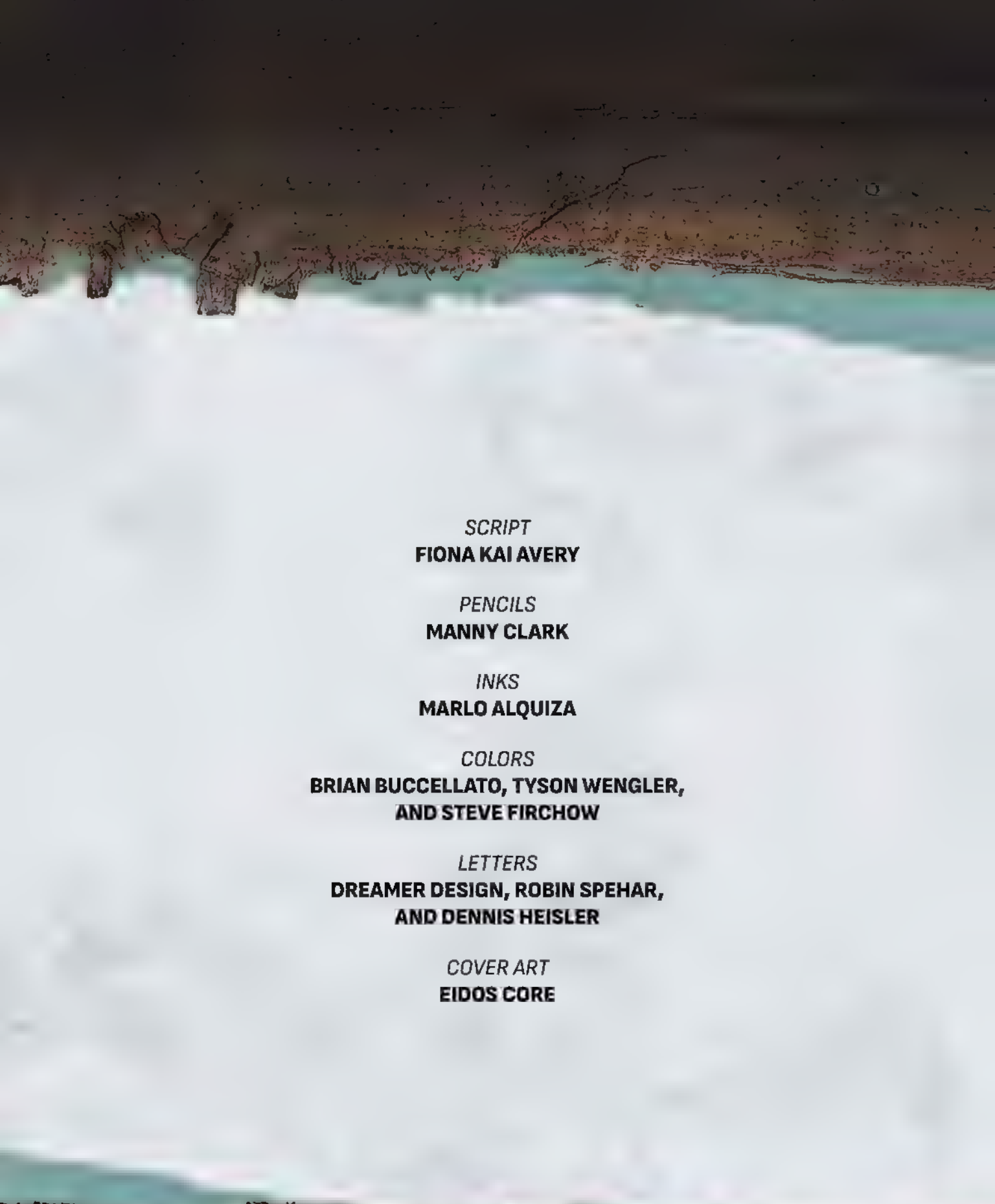
WHOOSH
SMACK!
THUD
CRACK

MISS CROFT!
WELL, IT IS YOU! I MUST SAY I HAD MY DOUBTS WHEN THE FIRST REPORTS CAME IN.
LOOKING FOR THIS, PERHAPS?
I'M SURPRISED YOU HAD THE COURAGE TO FACE ME YOURSELF, KAGAN.
COURAGE? COURAGE IS IRRELEVANT AS LONG AS I HAVE THIS IN MY POSSESSION. WITH THIS, I CAN RULE THE WAKING WORLD AND THE DREAMING WORLD. I CAN HAVE ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING I EVER WANTED.
THERE'S JUST ONE THING I CAN'T HAVE AROUND HERE. AND THAT'S YOU.

SWOOSH
CHING
LARA! RUN!!

ZZZZZZZ
MYLES! DON'T! HE'S TOO POWERFUL FOR YOU!

...YOU MUST NOT RELY ON YOUR OWN SENSES. YOU MUST RELY ON FAITH ALONE. THIS IS A WORLD THAT OPERATES FROM THE HEART, NOT THE MIND.
AN INVISIBLE SWORD!
AAUUUGGGHHHH!
MYLES!
TO BE CONTINUED...



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AAUUUUUUUUGGGGHHHHHHH!
MYLES!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'VE DONE?
IT WAS TERRIBLE ENOUGH THAT HE'D SEVERED A SONGLINE, A VITAL LIFE-SUSTAINING ESOTERIC FEEDER TO THE REALM OF THE LIVING.
BUT KAGAN HAD THROWN MYLES INTO THE ABYSS, WHERE MY OLD MENTOR WOULD FALL MILES BEFORE HITTING THE END OF THE CHASM BELOW.
HE HAD TO BE STOPPED.
I CANNOT PERMIT YOU TO SEVER INNOCENT SONGLINES.

WHO THE HELL--
--DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
AKIO!
I AM THE SACRED SERVANT OF THE EARTH, WALKER OF LINES OLDER THAN THE SEA, I HAVE SUCCUMBED TO THE SECRET FIRE AND KNOW YOUR FEEBLE POWERS WILL NOT AVAIL YOU--
SWISH
GO BACK TO THE WORLD OF MEN! YOU DO NOT BELONG HERE!

AUUUUUUGH!!!!
AKIO!
WHY? WHY DID YOU LET THEM BOTH...
THEY ARE NOT DEAD.
NO ONE COULD POSSIBLY SURVIVE A FALL LIKE THAT.
NOTHING IS AS IT SEEMS HERE. REMEMBER, YOUR FRIEND MYLES IS ALREADY DEAD. HE WILL SURVIVE THE FALL, AS IT WERE.
OH.
BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, ON THIS SIDE OF THE WORLD-RIVER, ALL THINGS CAN BE UNDONE. THERE IS NO PERMANENCE.
KOKAKO, TIAWAIWAKA, E HOKI KUPE, PATUPAIAREHE, KAHU-KI-TE-RANGI!
KOKAKO, TIAWAIWAKA, E HOKI KUPE, PATUPAIAREHE KAHU-KI-TE-RANGI!

IT IS SAFE TO CROSS.
THANK YOU.
AKIO, I MUST KNOW. HOW DID YOU GET TO KAGAN WITHOUT HIM KNOWING YOU WERE COMING?
MY PEOPLE HAVE WAYS OF TRAVELING, LIKE CATS WE MOVE UNHEARD IN THE DREAMING.
SHOW ME.
I CANNOT SHOW YOU, I CAN ONLY ACCOMPANY YOU.
EVEN IF YOU WON'T SHOW ME, I'LL LEARN. TAKE ME TO WHERE KAGAN IS NOW.
VERY WELL, BUT YOU MAY NEVER RETURN FROM THE DREAMING UNDERWORLD ALIVE.
I'LL TAKE THAT CHANCE.
AND SO HE TOOK ME INTO THE BLUE FIRES.

A RIVER OF FLAME WHERE I LEARNED TO BREATHE ICE-HOT COALS.
AND COULD FEEL THAT OUR VIBRATIONS OF TRAVEL SHUDDERED THE WORLDS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE SONGLINE BANKS.
IF I CLOSED MY EYES, I COULD SEE OUR IMPACT ON THE LAND OF THE LIVING AS WE FLEW BY.
AND ON THE PRESSURES OF THE EARTH, GROANING UNDER THE IMMENSE WEIGHT OF OUR PASSAGE, THROUGH FIERY LINES WE SHOULD NOT HAVE ACCESS TO.
AND AT SEA, OUR PASSAGE PULLED THE WATERS INTO A HEAVY FOAM, CRUSHING AND KILLING AS IT SWEPT BY.

I COULD FEEL IT ALL COALESCING, LIKE THE WATERS, AND THE IMMEDIACY OF THAT HEAVY SACRED PLACE THROBBED IN MY TEMPLES.
AKIO TELLS ME IT IS THE HEART OF EVERYTHING. THE HEART OF OUR WORLD, THE UNDERWORLD, AND THE SECRET LOCATION HAS RESTED ONLY WITH HIS TRIBE FOR CENTURIES.
I CAN FEEL THE HEART OF THE SONGLINES BEATING. IT BEATS JUST ONE SECOND SLOWER THAN MY OWN.
OF ALL THE TREASURES I HAVE EVER SEEN, THIS ONE SEEMS THE MOST MAGNIFICENT AND THE MOST UNATTAINABLE.
FOR WHO COULD REALLY CAPTURE IT AND CONTAIN IT?

WE MUST PURGE THE SONGLINE HERE, OR BE DESTROYED BY THE CENTER.
I KNOW. SOMEHOW, I KNOW WE DON'T BELONG IN THAT FIRE.
I SHOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN YOU THIS WAY. IT WILL HAVE CONSEQUENCES.
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
LOOK!

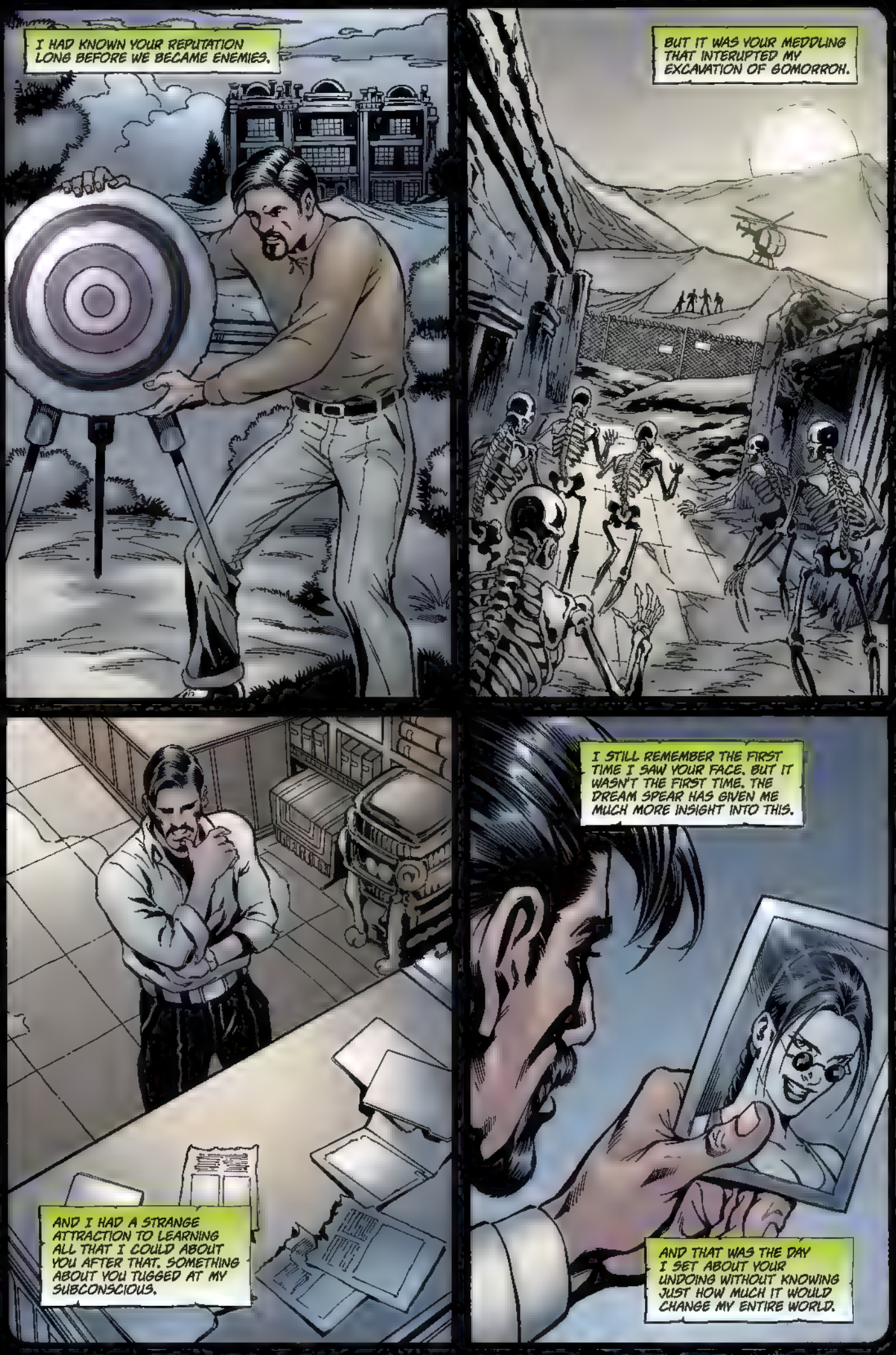
LARA, WAIT!
I HAVE TO REACH HIM IN TIME! I THINK I KNOW WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO!
CAN'T GET TO HIM!
IT'S LIKE A PRISON FOR ME AND—
SECURITY FOR THE HEART. HOW DID KAGAN MANAGE TO SQUEEZE INSIDE THERE?
LET ME IN!

HOW CAN I REACH HIM?
I COULD FEEL HIS THOUGHTS INSIDE MY HEAD. IT WAS BECAUSE WE HAD TRAVELED THE SONGLINES TOGETHER THAT HE COULD NOW SPEAK TO ME IN THE MOST INTIMATE RECESSES OF MY THOUGHTS.
YOU MUST SEVER ALL YOUR PAST MISTAKES. THEY BIND YOU FROM GETTING CLOSE TO HIM.
I MUST SEVER...
I MUST SEVER THESE WITH THE WEAPON I'VE BEEN GIVEN.

THWOCK!
KRIKAKRIT!
KRIKKK!
FSSSSST
AH! AAHHHHH!
I REMEMBER...!

THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU.
IT WASN'T THE FIRST TIME I EVER SAW YOU.
WE ENDED UP HELPING EACH OTHER EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE TRYING TO SABOTAGE MY DIG.
I THOUGHT I HAD THE UPPER HAND BUT IN REVEALING MY PAST ASSOCIATION WITH YOU ON THE DORA DEL SOL PIRATE SHIP...
I SOMEHOW SET ALL OF THIS IN MOTION. I SEE IT NOW.

I JUST SEVERED MY OWN SONGLINE. WHAT HAVE I DONE?
YOU HAVE UNDONE.
ONE OF YOUR MISTAKES.
THEN IT'S TIME TO FIX THEM ALL.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN THERE? YOU CAN'T BREAK THROUGH, THERE'S TOO MANY SONGLINES.
AUUUUUUUUGH!!


I HAD KNOWN YOUR REPUTATION LONG BEFORE WE BECAME ENEMIES.
BUT IT WAS YOUR MEDDLING THAT INTERUPTED MY EXCAVATION OF GOMORROH.
AND I HAD A STRANGE ATTRACTION TO LEARNING ALL THAT I COULD ABOUT YOU AFTER THAT. SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TUGGED AT MY SUBCONSCIOUS.
I STILL REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOUR FACE. BUT IT WASN'T THE FIRST TIME. THE DREAM SPEAR HAS GIVEN ME MUCH MORE INSIGHT INTO THIS.
AND THAT WAS THE DAY I SET ABOUT YOUR UNDOING WITHOUT KNOWING JUST HOW MUCH IT WOULD CHANGE MY ENTIRE WORLD.

WHY...? WHY ME?
WHY YOU? I ASK MYSELF THAT QUESTION EVERY DAY.
WHY WON'T YOU CEASE AND DESIST? I'M TIRED OF FIGHTING YOU!
HUGH-BUG!
BECAUSE THE DREAM SPEAR DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU!

I'M COMING FOR YOU KAGAN, ONE MISTAKE AT A TIME!
DON'T YOU SEE? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
YOU'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR LIFETIMES. WE HAVE BEEN DOING THIS... FOR ETERNITY!

IT WAS HERE THAT I FIRST MET YOU AND MADE THE FIRST OF MY MISTAKES.
ARE YOU SO SURE OF THAT?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
KAGAN?
KAGAN!?

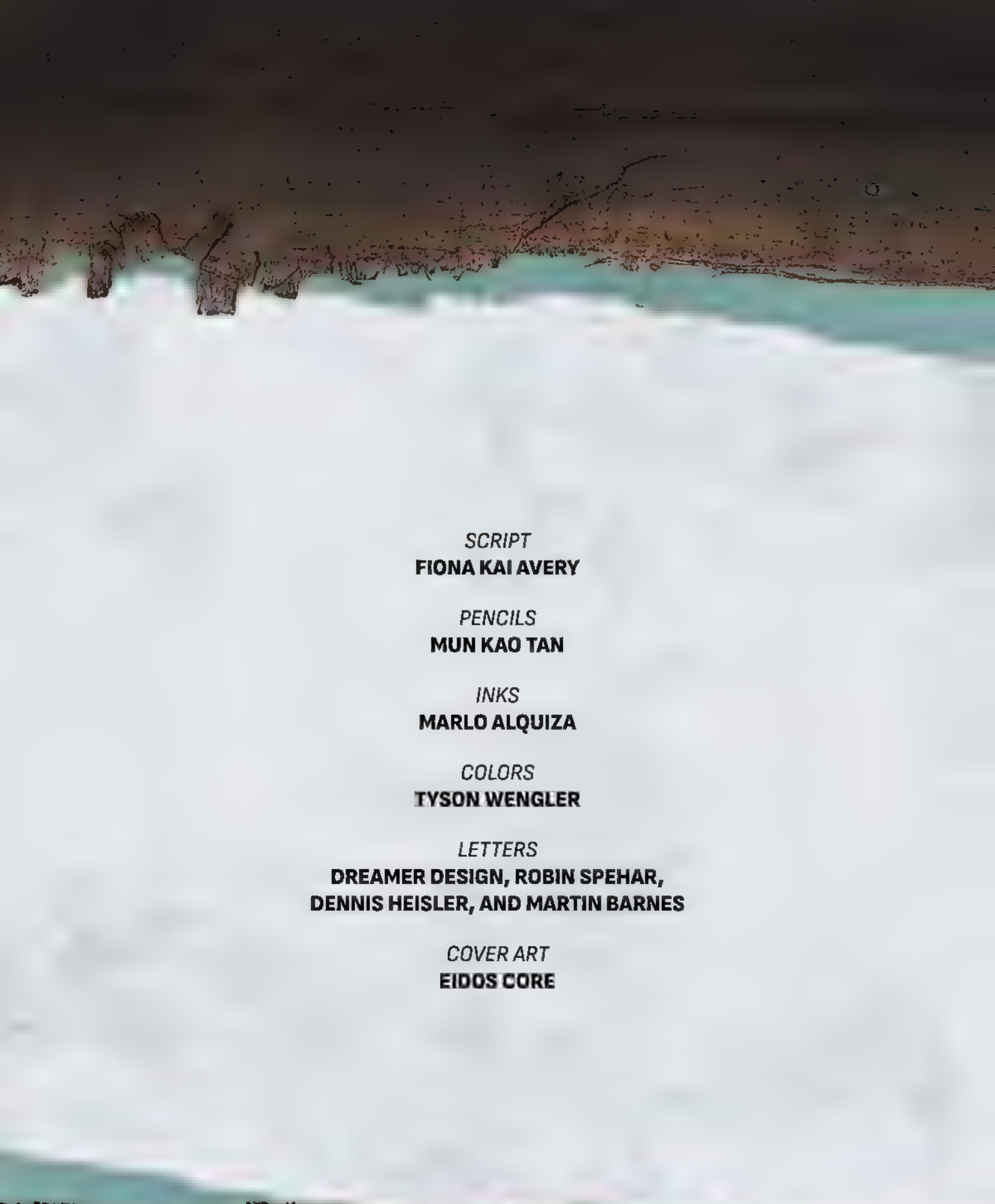
I WON'T LET YOU RUIN ANOTHER LIFE FOR ME.
HRRRRRRK!
AND THAT IS WHEN TIME STOPPED.
I... I'VE KNOWN YOU... FOREVER...
*ISSUE 8 TAKES PLACE IN THE SINGLE SECOND OF THIS PANEL.

YOU FIRST AWAKENED ME TO THE IDEA WHEN YOU LEFT ME TO ROT IN THE ALGERIAN DESERT MOUNTAINS. I REMEMBERED SEEING YOU BEFORE AND I WENT TO FIND THE DREAM SPEAR TO KNOW THE TRUTH.
THE DREAM SPEAR SHOWED ME EVERYTHING. YOU HAVE BEEN HUNTING ME IN EVERY LIFE.
NO...
AND IN EVERY LIFE, YOU EITHER KILLED OR IMPRISONED ME.
I KNOW...
I WILL NOT LET YOU DESTROY THIS, OR ME, AGAIN.

THAT SWORD IS NO MATCH FOR THE DREAM SPEAR.
THIS TIME, I AM TRULY THE STRONGEST ONE BETWEEN US!
ARE YOU SO CERTAIN ABOUT THAT?
OF COURSE. THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT.
AGAIN, YOU'RE WRONG.
YOU WOULD TRY TO RECTIFY A MISTAKE WITH YET ANOTHER MISTAKE.
AND I CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT.

FOR YOUR PEOPLE. I'M SORRY IT WAS STOLEN.
AND NOW TO SERVE JUSTICE...
NO!
WHAT'S THIS?
I REALIZED THAT IN ALL OF HISTORY, I HAD BEEN DESTROYING THE ONE THING I WAS MEANT TO PROTECT.
KAGAN WAS MISGUIDED. BUT IT WAS MY MISTAKE THAT I PUT HIM AWAY FOR LIFE, OR EVEN LET HIM DIE THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES.
THIS TIME, I'M NOT GOING TO LET HIM DIE.
WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH HIM THEN?
I'M GOING TO SHOW HIM HOW IT'S REALLY DONE.

HE HAS THE OPTION OF BECOMING MY PARTNER OR GOING TO JAIL. I THINK IT WILL BE AN EASY DECISION FOR HIM. BUT IN THIS LIFE, HE GETS THE DECISION.
LARA! THERE'S SOMETHING YET THAT I NEED BEFORE YOU LEAVE THIS WORLD.
MYLES!
YOU CANNOT HAVE THE DREAM SPEAR.
NO. INSTEAD, THERE'S A VITAL BIT OF INFORMATION I MUST PASS ON. I REQUIRE SOMETHING SPECIAL OF YOU.
IS THIS YOUR LAST REQUEST, MY OLD FRIEND?
YES, MY DEAR GIRL. AND IT'S A HUM-DINGER, TOO.
TO BE CONTINUED...



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COVER ART
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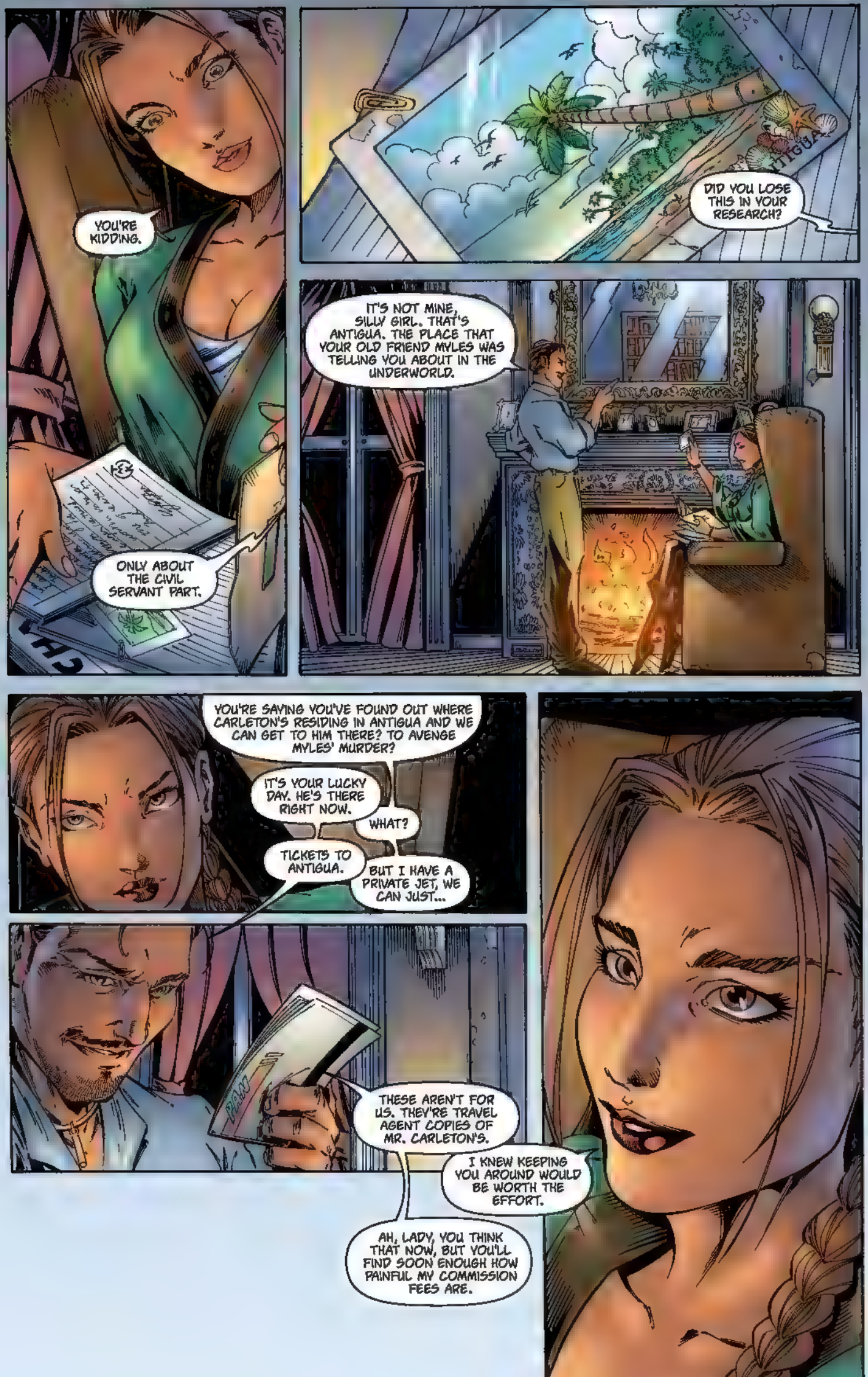
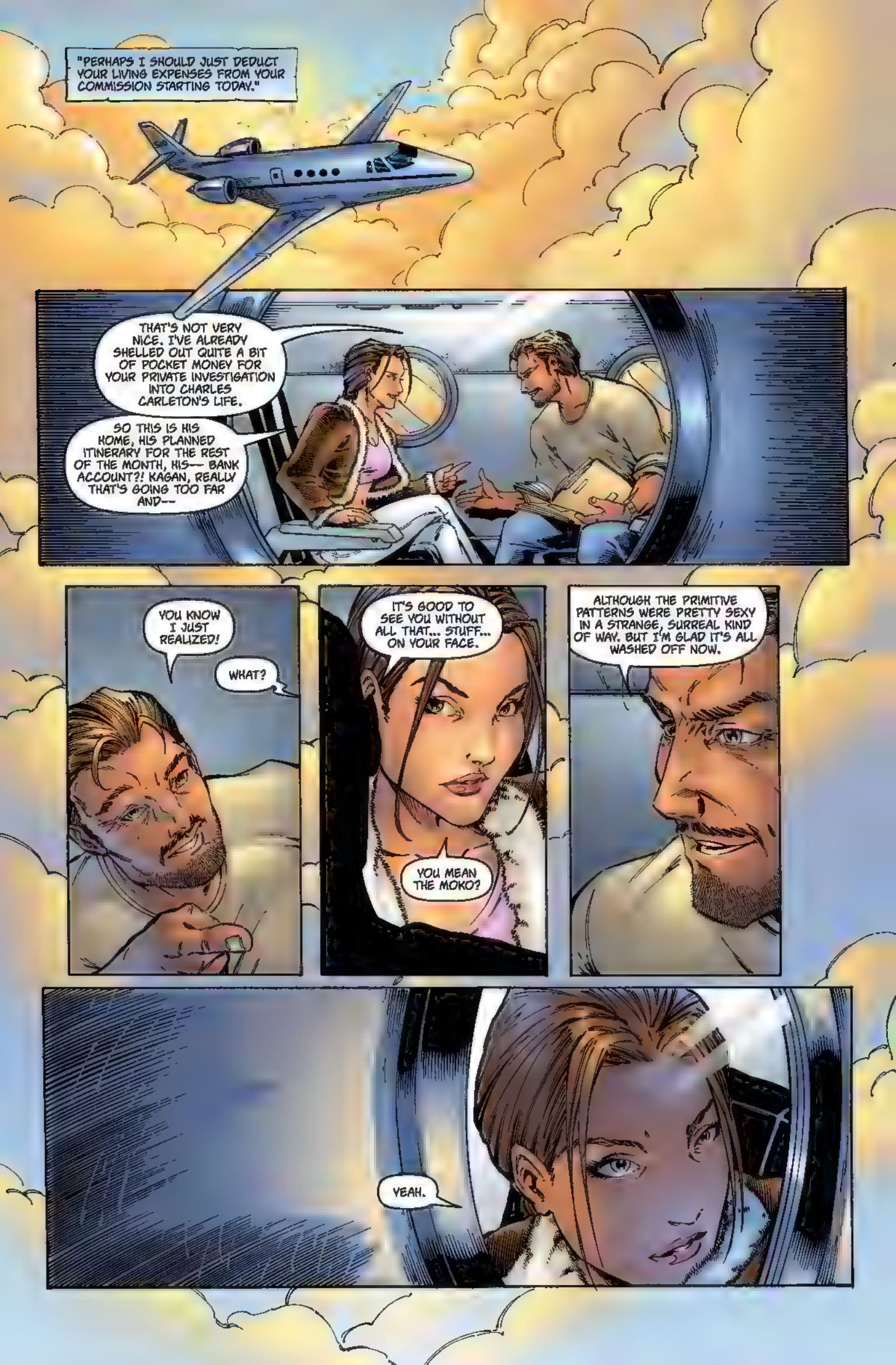
IT'S LATE, CHOPIN IS PLAYING ON THE BBC. I'M TIRED, BUT LIKE EACH NIGHT SINCE RETURNING FROM THE MAORI UNDERWORLD, I FIND I DREAM, BUT DO NOT SLEEP.
MYLES. LEFT IN THE UNDERWORLD ALONE AND UNABLE TO AVENGE HIS MURDER.
I LEFT MY FAVORITE MAN, MY MENTOR, MY FRIEND, DOWN THERE WITHOUT HOPE OF EVER SEEING THE WAKING WORLD AGAIN.
SOMEONE STILL WAITS FOR ME TO COMPLETE THE JOURNEY. THERE WAS A PROMISE TO FULFILL.
DID I CHOOSE DUTY OVER FRIENDSHIP AGAIN? HAVE I NOT BROKEN OLD HABITS?

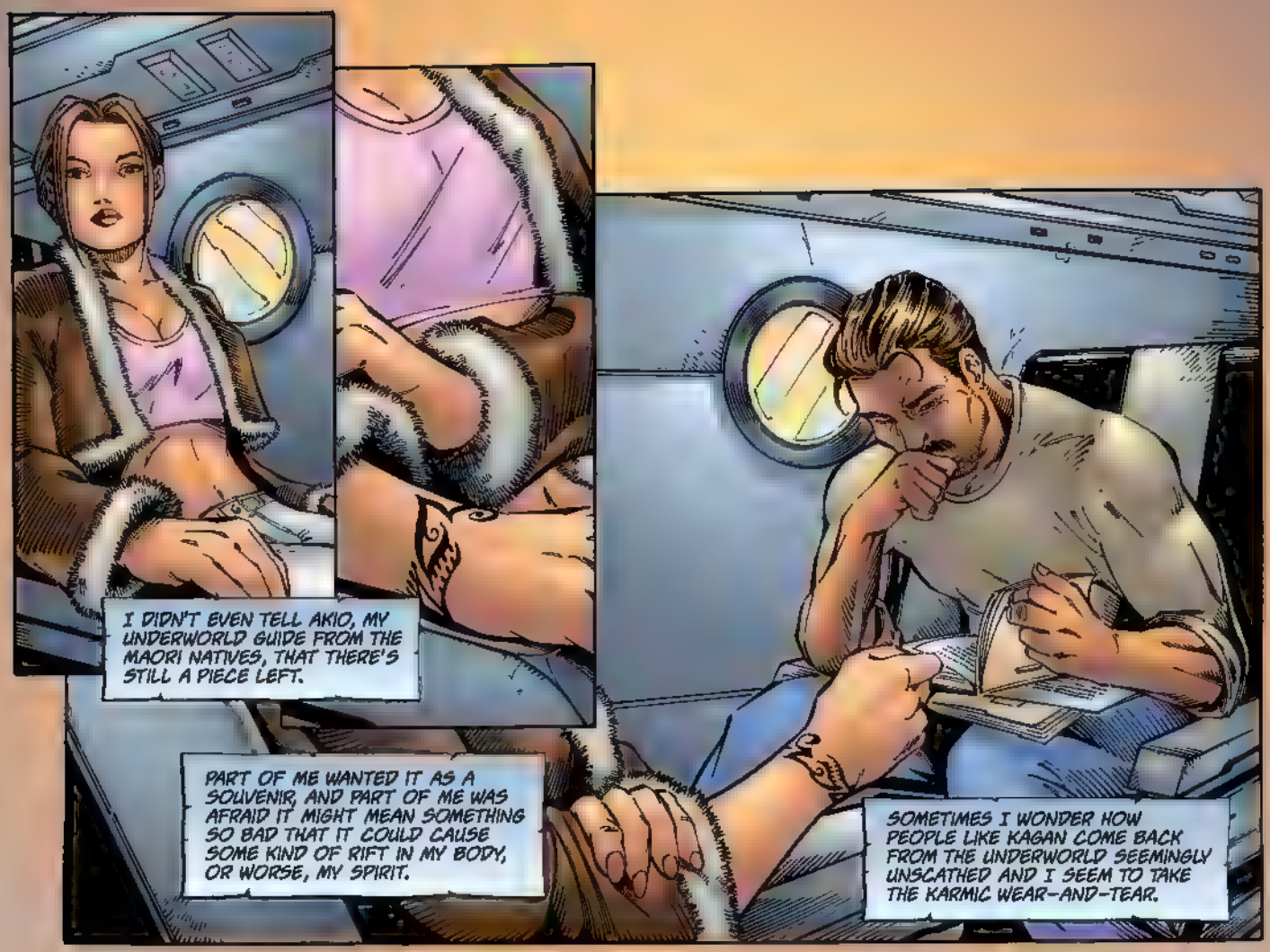
YOU ARE KEEPING GOOD CARE OF MY GUN, AREN'T YOU, MY GIRL?
YES, YES. YOUR GUN SHOOTS BETTER THAN MINE. MINE'S ALWAYS OFF BY THREE INCHES THESE DAYS. IN FACT--
AGUH! HUGHHHUFF!
WHAT'S-- HAPP-- ENING-- TO ME?
MYLES?
LARA! DAMN IT, I JUST FOUND YOU AGAIN! WE HAVEN'T HAD THE CHANCE TO SAY EVERYTHING YET!
LARA!

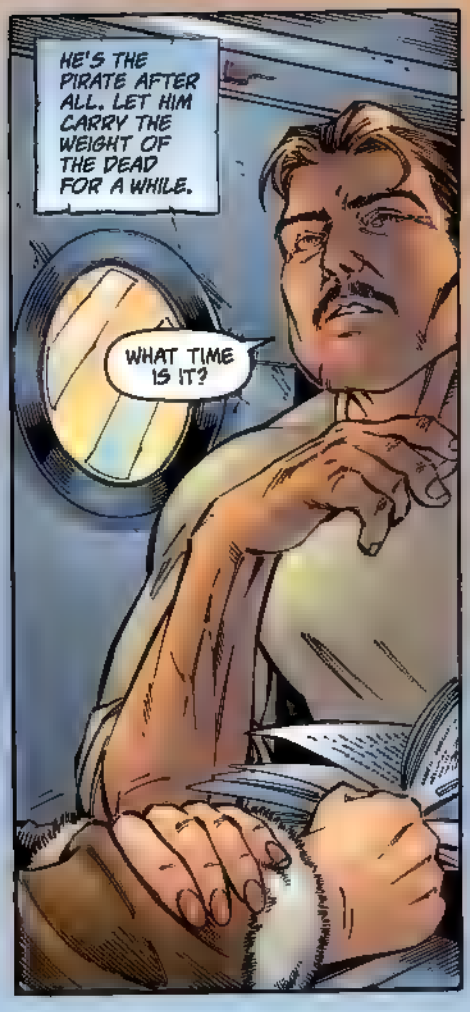
DON'T TOUCH HER! YOU'LL DESTROY HER!
TAKE IT. TAKE IT NOW OR BE FOREVER LOST.
WHAT'S HAPPENING? AKIO...
I FEEL SO WEAK. SO DRAINED...
HELP ME. PLEASE.
KAKARIKI, MAHUIKA!
MOKO NGERENGERE! TANIWA TAPU!
MOKO WAIRUA! PUHI TAPU!
TOHUNGA, TOHUNGA PUHI!
THEY'RE TAKING ME BACK. HOW I WANTED TO STAY... TO SEE YOU MORE... MY OLD FRIEND.

MYLES.
O CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN!
KAGAN!
RUMINATING ALONE AGAIN I SEE. LEAVING ALL THE DIRTY WORK TO ME AGAIN.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, YOU VAGRANT?
WOULD A VAGRANT SPEND SEVEN HOURS RESEARCHING TRAVEL DOCUMENTS ON A "JUST TRUST ME" BASIS?
LOOK WHAT I FOUND!
MR. CHARLES CARLETON. BILLIONAIRE, CIVIL SERVANT, BRITISH INTELLIGENCE. SPY FOR CERTAIN AND POSSIBLE DOUBLE AGENT.
YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING ON MYLES' KILLER.

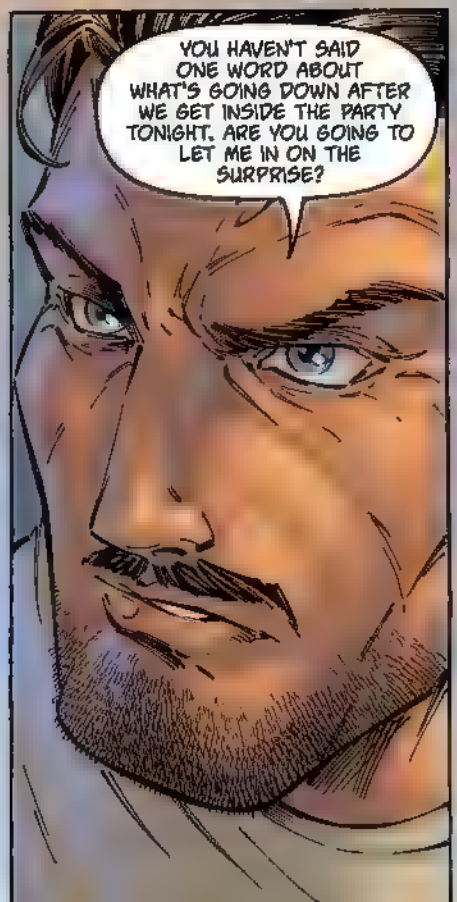

YOU'RE KIDDING.
ONLY ABOUT THE CIVIL SERVANT PART.
DID YOU LOSE THIS IN YOUR RESEARCH?
ANTIGUA
IT'S NOT MINE, SILLY GIRL. THAT'S ANTIGUA. THE PLACE THAT YOUR OLD FRIEND MYLES WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT IN THE UNDERWORLD.
YOU'RE SAYING YOU'VE FOUND OUT WHERE CARLETON'S RESIDING IN ANTIGUA AND WE CAN GET TO HIM THERE? TO AVENGE MYLES' MURDER?
IT'S YOUR LUCKY DAY. HE'S THERE RIGHT NOW.
WHAT?
TICKETS TO ANTIGUA.
BUT I HAVE A PRIVATE JET, WE CAN JUST...
PART 1
THESE AREN'T FOR US. THEY'RE TRAVEL AGENT COPIES OF MR. CARLETON'S.
I KNEW KEEPING YOU AROUND WOULD BE WORTH THE EFFORT.
AH, LADY, YOU THINK THAT NOW, BUT YOU'LL FIND SOON ENOUGH HOW PAINFUL MY COMMISSION FEES ARE.

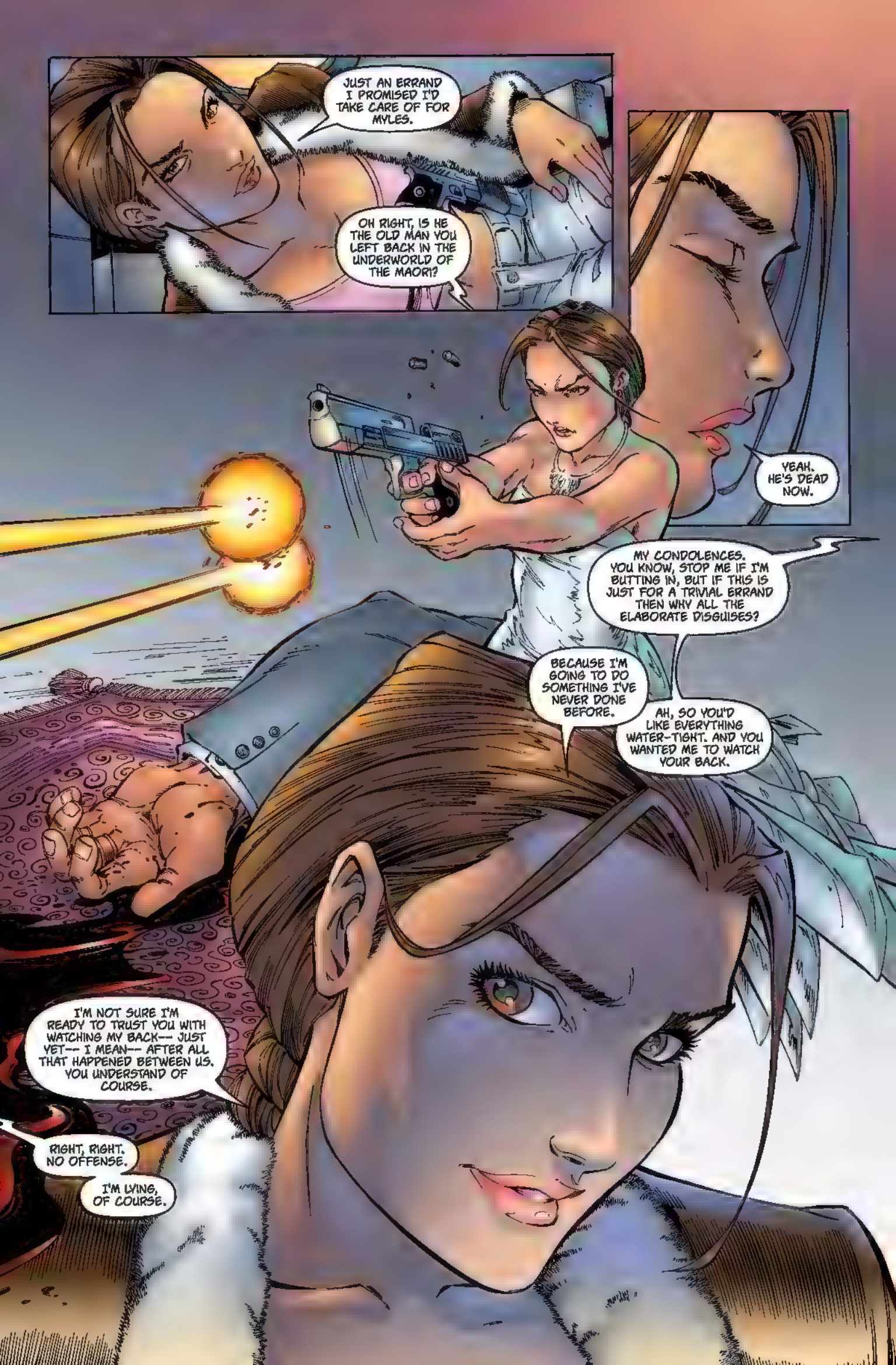

"PERHAPS I SHOULD JUST DEDUCT YOUR LIVING EXPENSES FROM YOUR COMMISSION STARTING TODAY."
THAT'S NOT VERY NICE. I'VE ALREADY SHELLED OUT QUITE A BIT OF POCKET MONEY FOR YOUR PRIVATE INVESTIGATION INTO CHARLES CARLETON'S LIFE.
SO THIS IS HIS HOME, HIS PLANNED ITINERARY FOR THE REST OF THE MONTH, HIS— BANK ACCOUNT?! KAGAN, REALLY THAT'S GOING TOO FAR AND--
YOU KNOW I JUST REALIZED!
WHAT?
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU WITHOUT ALL THAT... STUFF... ON YOUR FACE.
YOU MEAN THE MOKO?
ALTHOUGH THE PRIMITIVE PATTERNS WERE PRETTY SEXY IN A STRANGE, SURREAL KIND OF WAY. BUT I'M GLAD IT'S ALL WASHED OFF NOW.
YEAH.

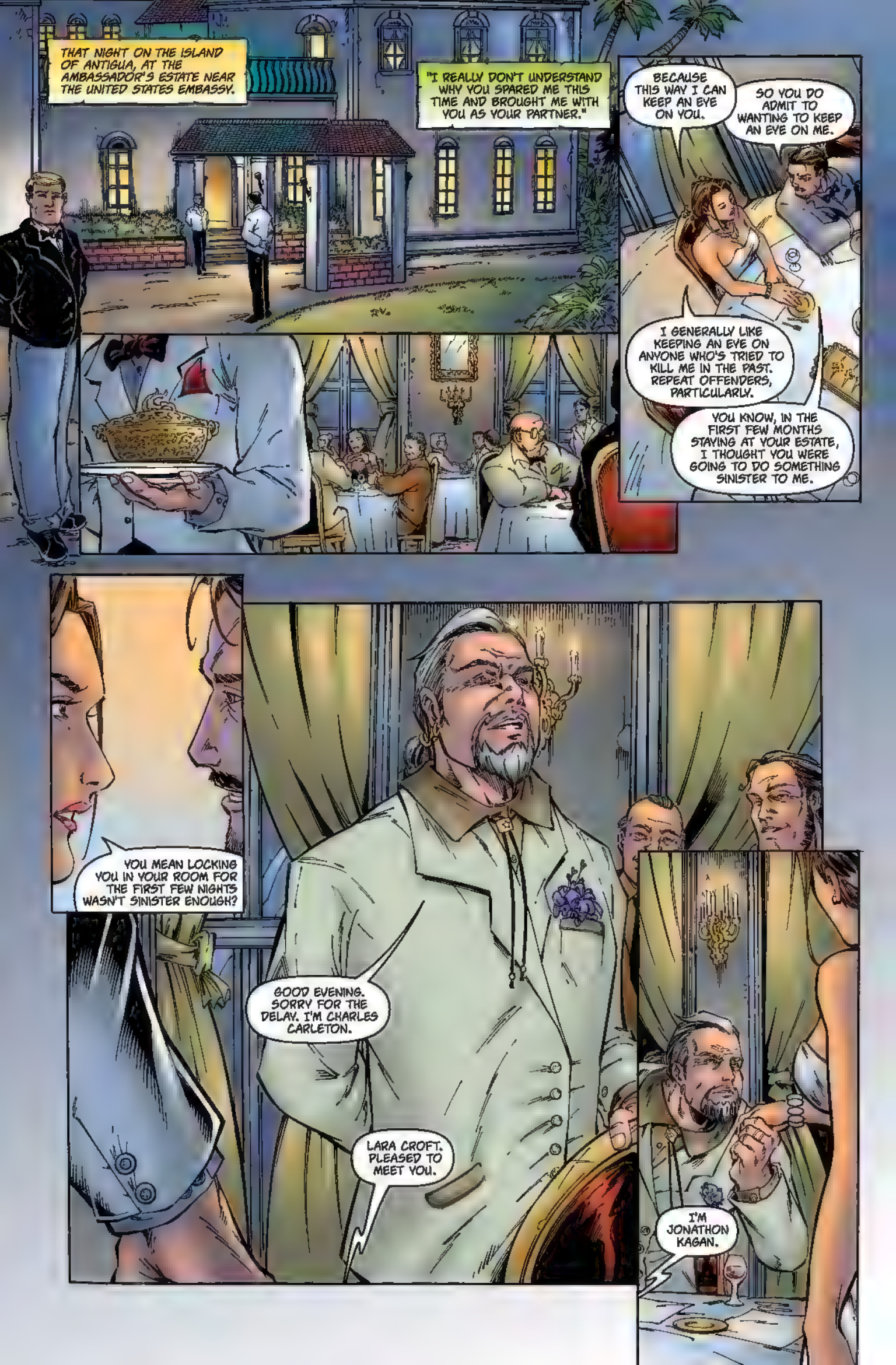

I DIDN'T EVEN TELL AKIO, MY UNDERWORLD GUIDE FROM THE MAORI NATIVES, THAT THERE'S STILL A PIECE LEFT.
PART OF ME WANTED IT AS A SOUVENIR, AND PART OF ME WAS AFRAID IT MIGHT MEAN SOMETHING SO BAD THAT IT COULD CAUSE SOME KIND OF RIFT IN MY BODY, OR WORSE, MY SPIRIT.
SOMETIMES I WONDER HOW PEOPLE LIKE KAGAN COME BACK FROM THE UNDERWORLD SEEMINGLY UNSCATHED AND I SEEM TO TAKE THE KARMIC WEAR-AND-TEAR.


HE'S THE PIRATE AFTER ALL. LET HIM CARRY THE WEIGHT OF THE DEAD FOR A WHILE.
WHAT TIME IS IT?

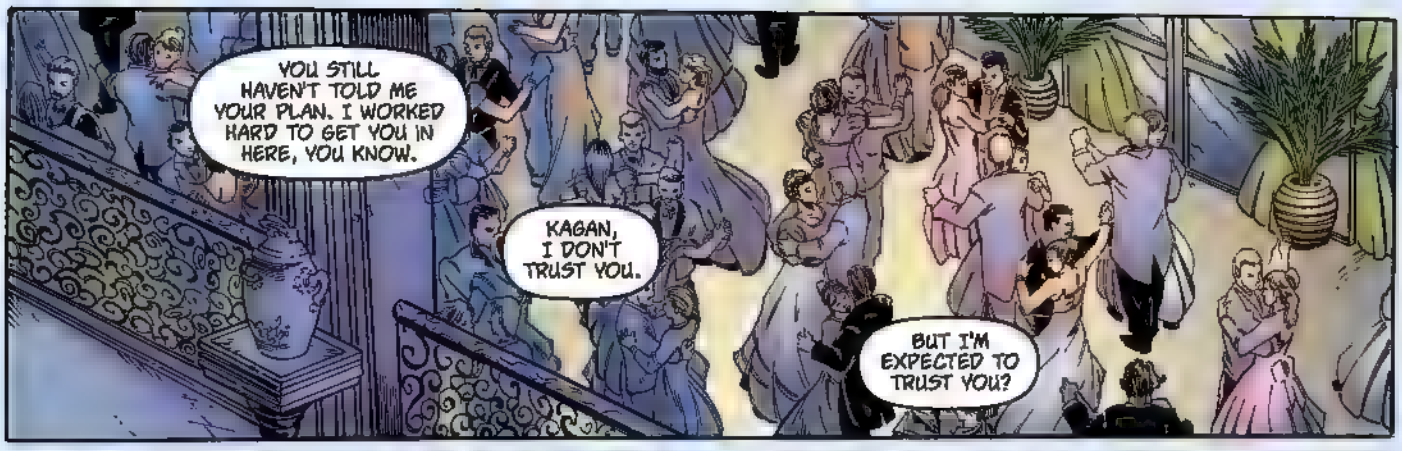
SEVEN THIRTY, SHARP.

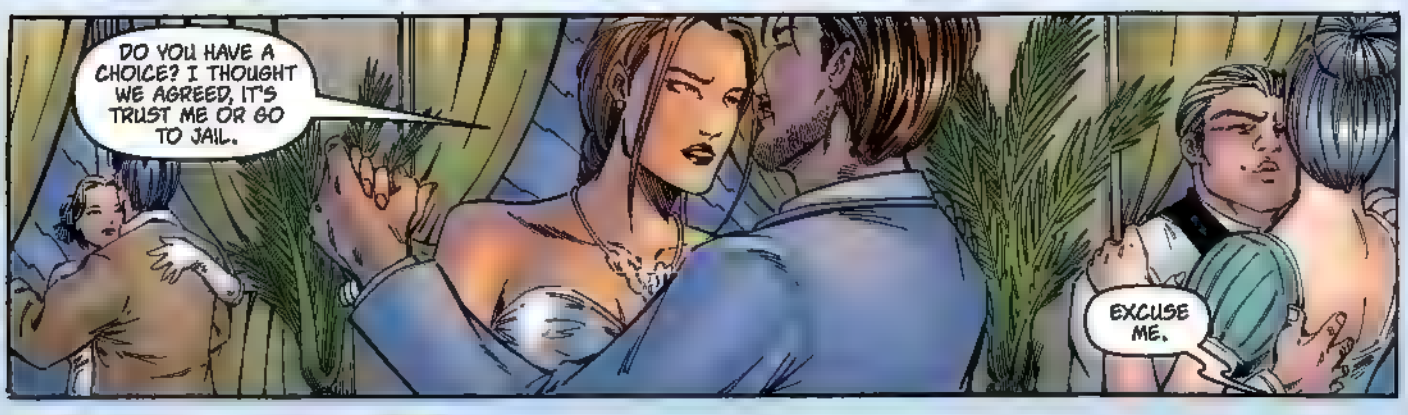

YOU HAVEN'T SAID ONE WORD ABOUT WHAT'S GOING DOWN AFTER WE GET INSIDE THE PARTY TONIGHT. ARE YOU GOING TO LET ME IN ON THE SURPRISE?

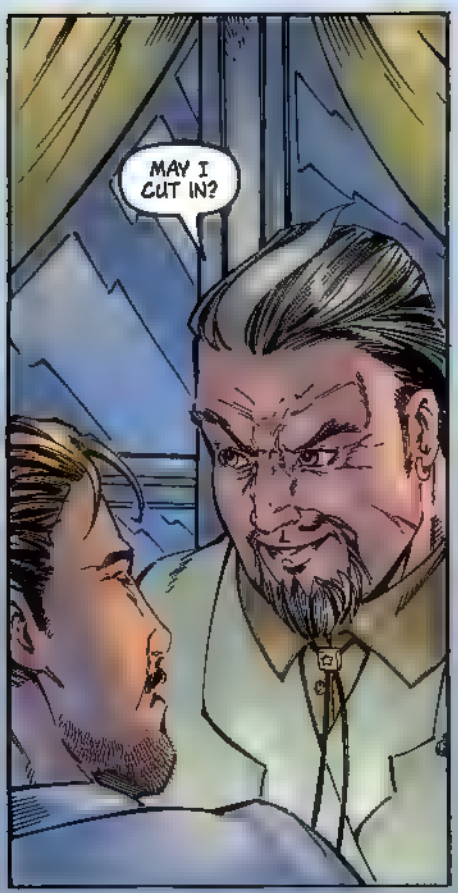

JUST AN ERRAND I PROMISED I'D TAKE CARE OF FOR MYLES.
OH RIGHT, IS HE THE OLD MAN YOU LEFT BACK IN THE UNDERWORLD OF THE MAORI?
YEAH. HE'S DEAD NOW.
MY CONDOLENCES. YOU KNOW, STOP ME IF I'M BUTTING IN, BUT IF THIS IS JUST FOR A TRIVIAL ERRAND THEN WHY ALL THE ELABORATE DISGUISES?
BECAUSE I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING I'VE NEVER DONE BEFORE.
AH, SO YOU'D LIKE EVERYTHING WATER-TIGHT. AND YOU WANTED ME TO WATCH YOUR BACK.
I'M NOT SURE I'M READY TO TRUST YOU WITH WATCHING MY BACK-- JUST YET-- I MEAN-- AFTER ALL THAT HAPPENED BETWEEN US. YOU UNDERSTAND OF COURSE.
RIGHT, RIGHT. NO OFFENSE.
I'M LYING, OF COURSE.

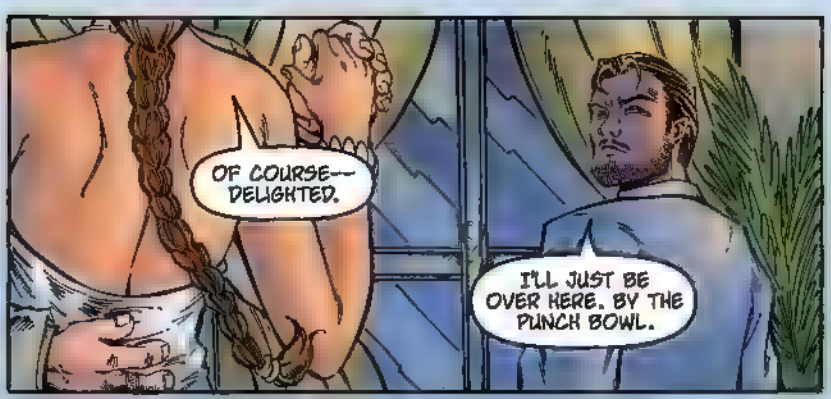

THAT NIGHT ON THE ISLAND OF ANTIGUA, AT THE AMBASSADOR'S ESTATE NEAR THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY.
"I REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU SPARED ME THIS TIME AND BROUGHT ME WITH YOU AS YOUR PARTNER."
BECAUSE THIS WAY I CAN KEEP AN EYE ON YOU.
SO YOU DO ADMIT TO WANTING TO KEEP AN EYE ON ME.
I GENERALLY LIKE KEEPING AN EYE ON ANYONE WHO'S TRIED TO KILL ME IN THE PAST. REPEAT OFFENDERS, PARTICULARLY.
YOU KNOW, IN THE FIRST FEW MONTHS STAYING AT YOUR ESTATE, I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO DO SOMETHING SINISTER TO ME.
YOU MEAN LOCKING YOU IN YOUR ROOM FOR THE FIRST FEW NIGHTS WASN'T SINISTER ENOUGH?
GOOD EVENING. SORRY FOR THE DELAY. I'M CHARLES CARLETON.
LARA CROFT. PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
I'M JONATHON KAGAN.

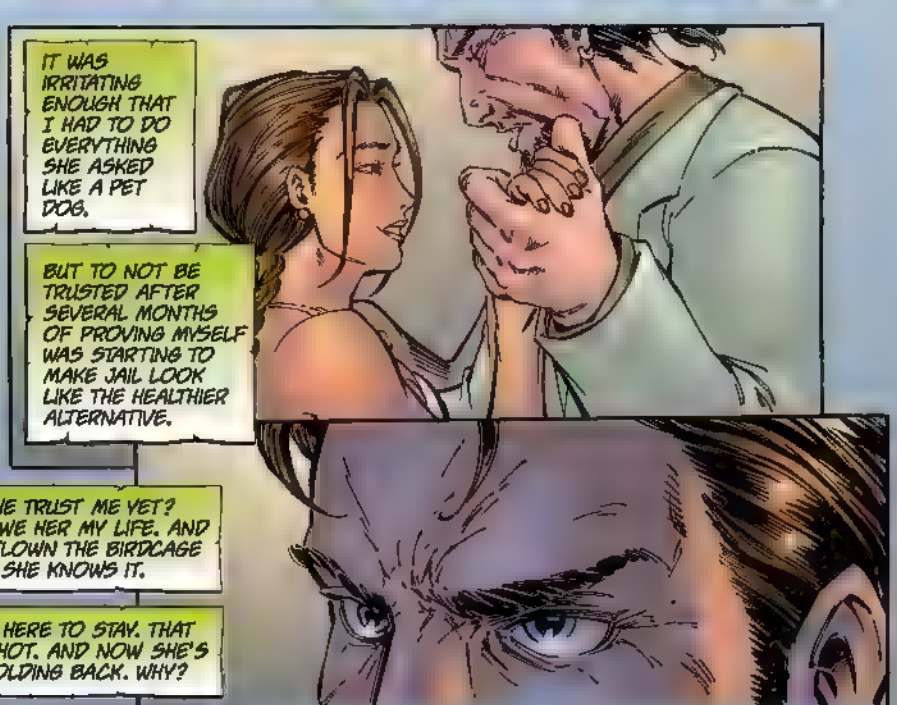
NO ONE TOLD ME I'D BE SITTING NEXT TO SOMEONE SO FAIR, OR I'D HAVE MADE AN APPEARANCE MUCH SOONER THAN THIS.
CHARMED, I'M SURE.
DOES THAT WORK?
DOES WHAT WORK?
THAT SLOBBERING LINE-- DOES THAT WORK WELL FOR YOU?

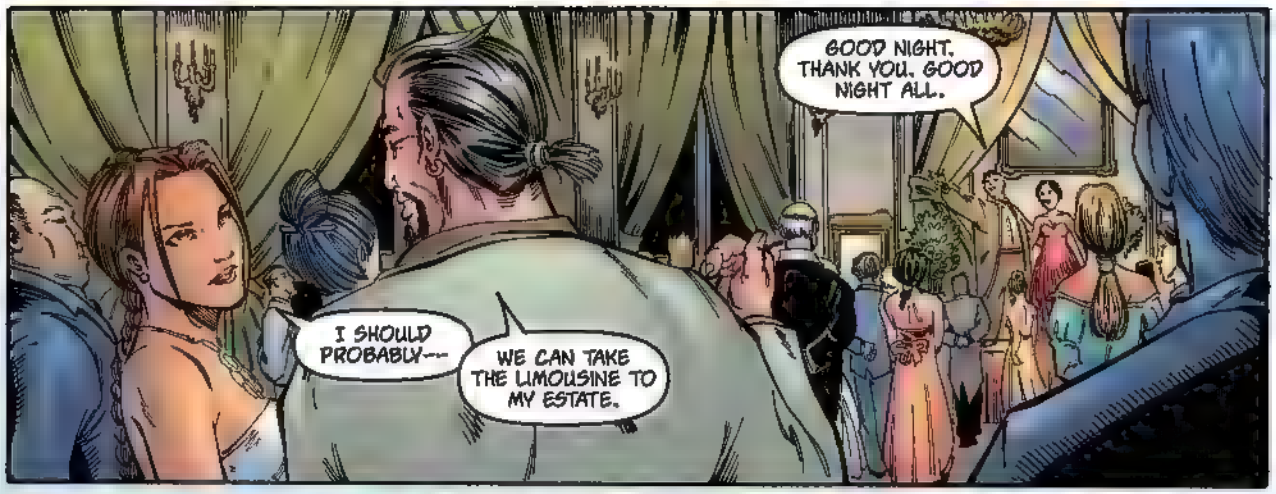

YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME YOUR PLAN. I WORKED HARD TO GET YOU IN HERE, YOU KNOW.
KAGAN, I DON'T TRUST YOU.
BUT I'M EXPECTED TO TRUST YOU?

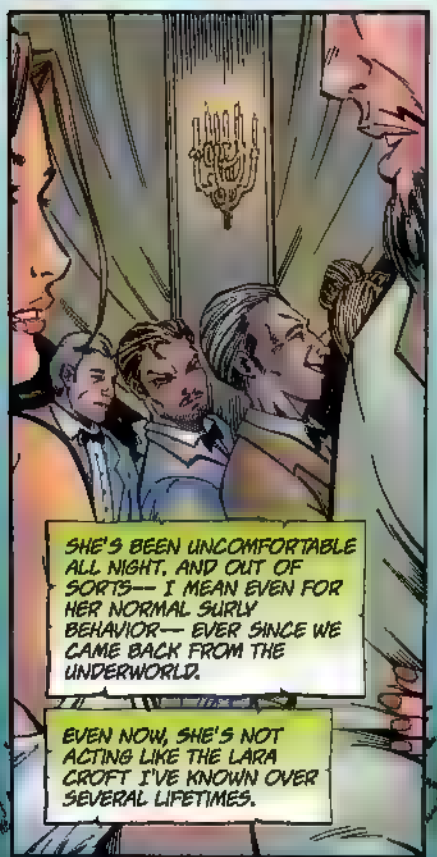

DO YOU HAVE A CHOICE? I THOUGHT WE AGREED, IT'S TRUST ME OR GO TO JAIL.
EXCUSE ME.


MAY I CUT IN?

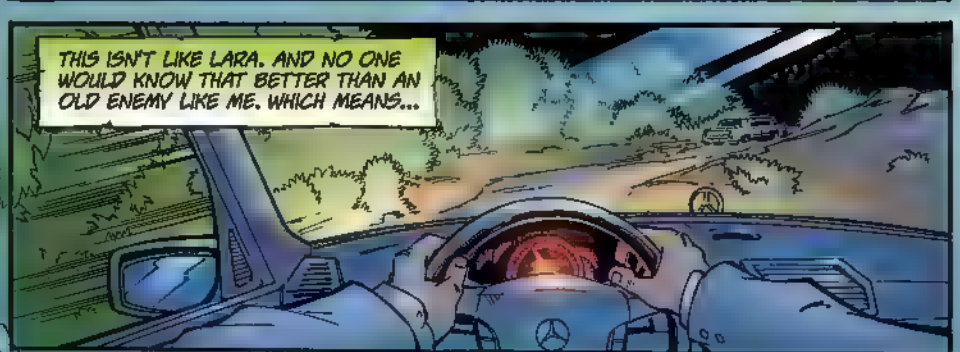

OF COURSE-- DELIGHTED.
I'LL JUST BE OVER HERE. BY THE PUNCH BOWL.


IT WAS IRRITATING ENOUGH THAT I HAD TO DO EVERYTHING SHE ASKED LIKE A PET DOG.
BUT TO NOT BE TRUSTED AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OF PROVING MYSELF WAS STARTING TO MAKE JAIL LOOK LIKE THE HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVE.
WHY DOESN'T SHE TRUST ME YET? SHE KNOWS I OWE HER MY LIFE. AND I COULD HAVE FLOWN THE BIRDCAGE LONG AGO AND SHE KNOWS IT.
SHE KNOWS I'M HERE TO STAY. THAT I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT. AND NOW SHE'S DELIBERATELY HOLDING BACK. WHY?


GOOD NIGHT. THANK YOU. GOOD NIGHT ALL.
I SHOULD PROBABLY---
WE CAN TAKE THE LIMOUSINE TO MY ESTATE.


SHE'S BEEN UNCOMFORTABLE ALL NIGHT. AND OUT OF SORTS-- I MEAN EVEN FOR HER NORMAL SURLY BEHAVIOR-- EVER SINCE WE CAME BACK FROM THE UNDERWORLD.
EVEN NOW, SHE'S NOT ACTING LIKE THE LARA CROFT I'VE KNOWN OVER SEVERAL LIFETIMES.

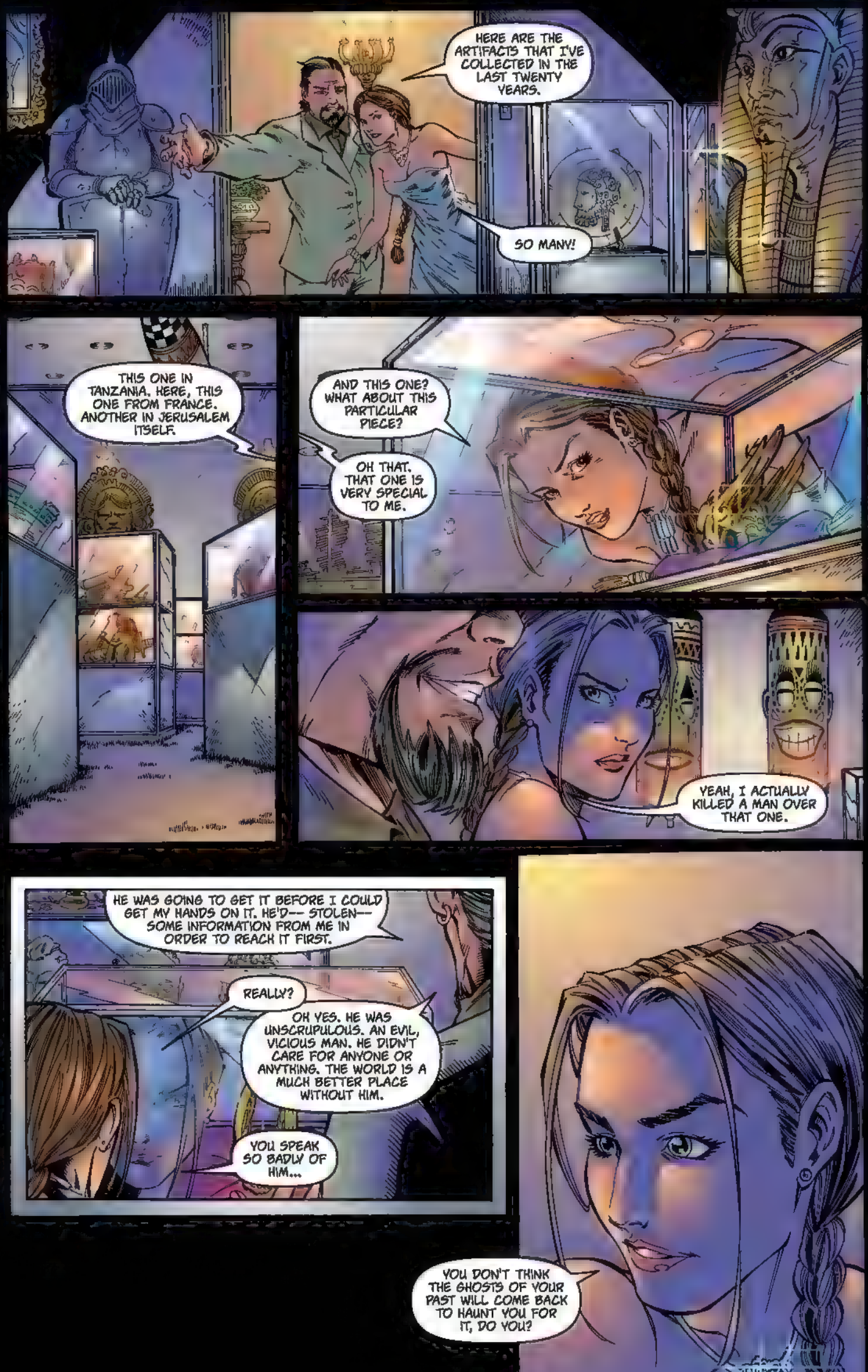
THANK YOU.
MY PLEASURE.


THIS ISN'T LIKE LARA. AND NO ONE WOULD KNOW THAT BETTER THAN AN OLD ENEMY LIKE ME. WHICH MEANS...

SHE'S GOING TO DO SOMETHING SHE DOESN'T WANT ME TO SEE.

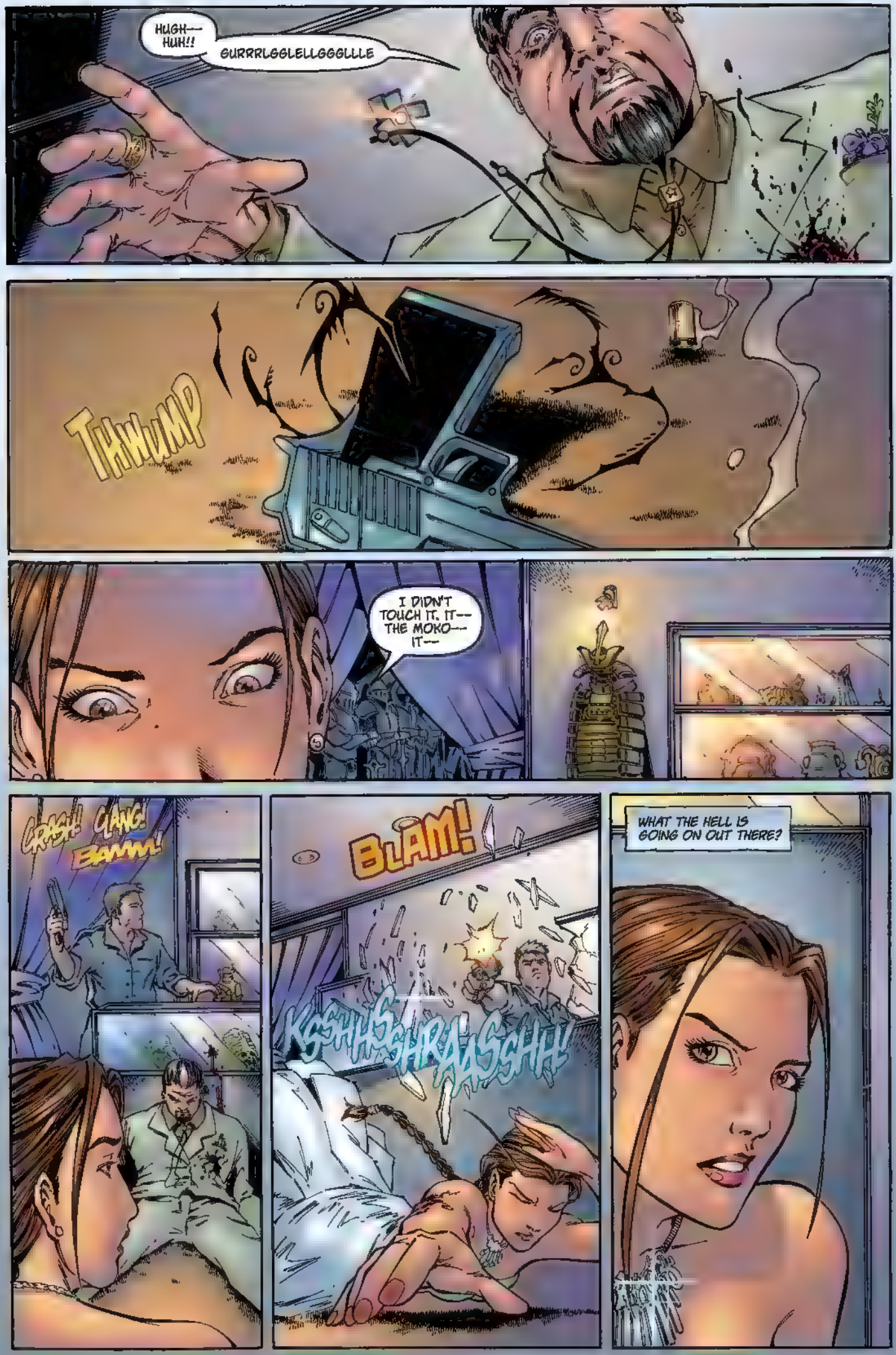
SOMETHING SHE ISN'T PROUD OF.

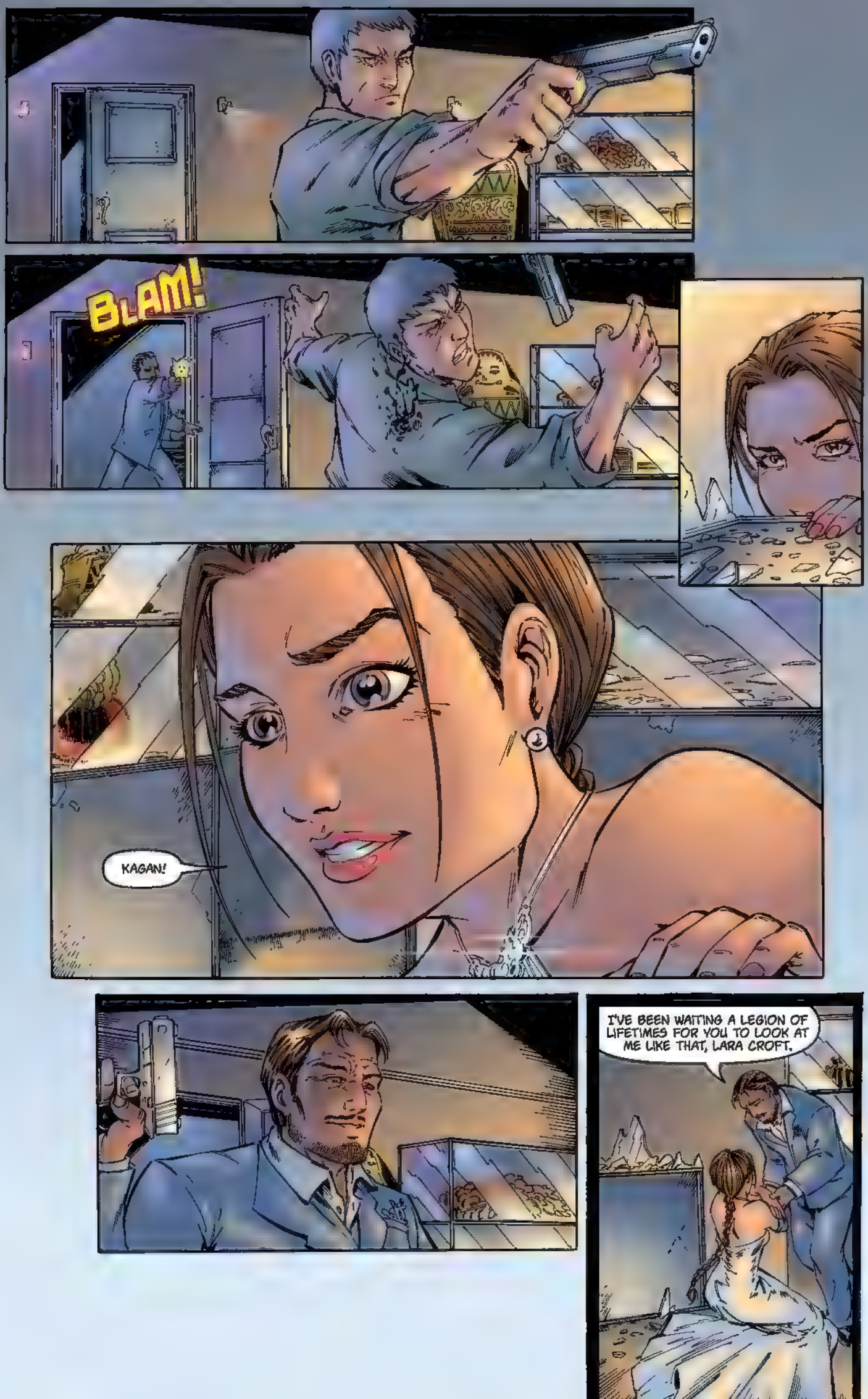
SO YOU HAVE MANY ITEMS IN YOUR COLLECTION?
OH, A GREAT DEAL. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THEM?
THAT WOULD BE LOVELY. I'M QUITE A FAN OF ANTIQUES.
THESE ARE MORE ARTIFACTS THAN-- AUGH!
AUFF! AHEM!
WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?
OH, NOTHING. NOTHING AT ALL. I THINK I STUMBLED FROM HAVING TOO MUCH TO DRINK. HEH!
RIGHT.

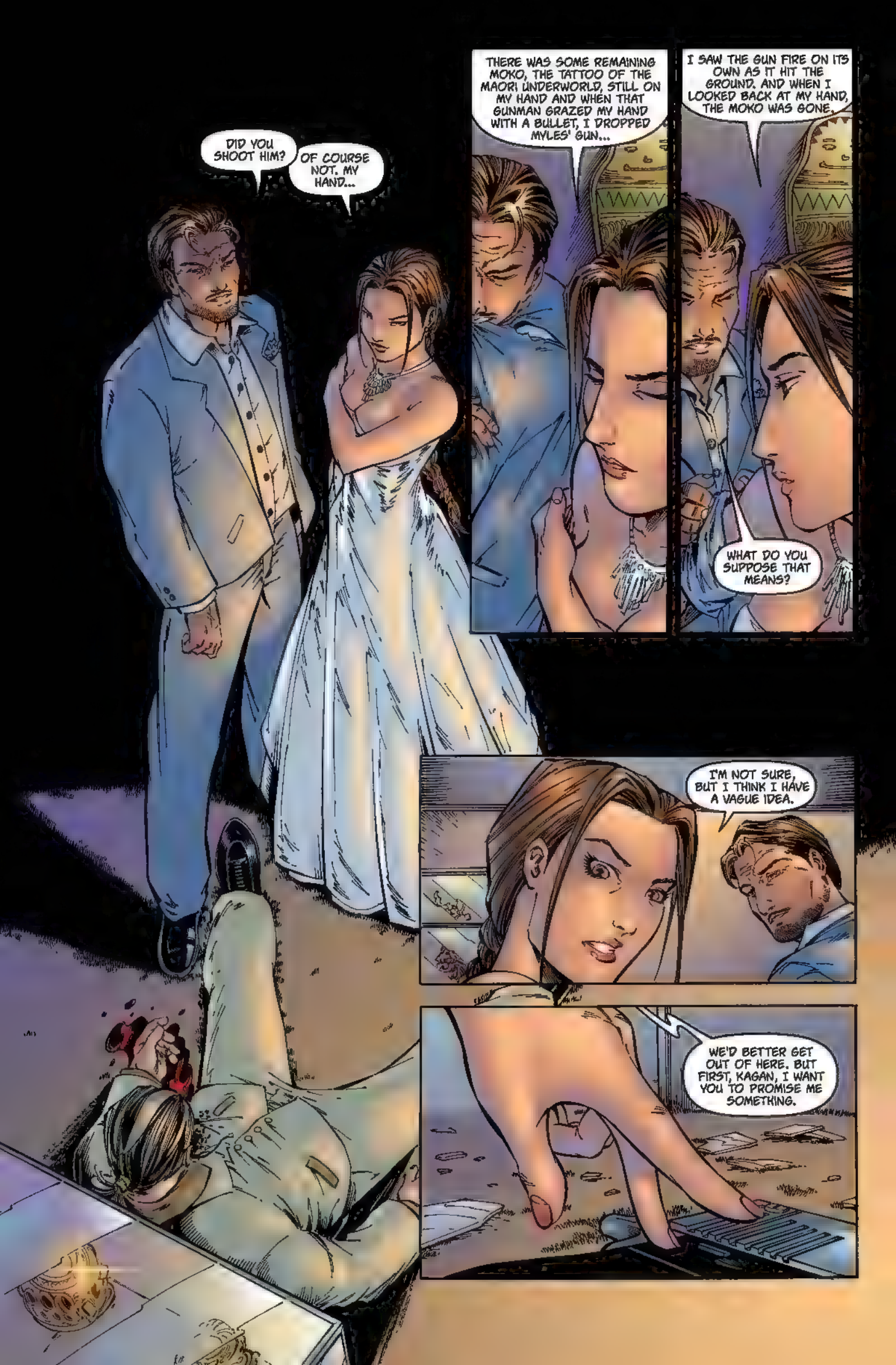

HERE ARE THE ARTIFACTS THAT I'VE COLLECTED IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS.
SO MANY!
THIS ONE IN TANZANIA. HERE, THIS ONE FROM FRANCE. ANOTHER IN JERUSALEM ITSELF.
AND THIS ONE? WHAT ABOUT THIS PARTICULAR PIECE?
OH THAT. THAT ONE IS VERY SPECIAL TO ME.
YEAH, I ACTUALLY KILLED A MAN OVER THAT ONE.
HE WAS GOING TO GET IT BEFORE I COULD GET MY HANDS ON IT. HE'D-- STOLEN-- SOME INFORMATION FROM ME IN ORDER TO REACH IT FIRST.
REALLY?
OH YES. HE WAS UNSCRUPULOUS. AN EVIL, VICIOUS MAN. HE DIDN'T CARE FOR ANYONE OR ANYTHING. THE WORLD IS A MUCH BETTER PLACE WITHOUT HIM.
YOU SPEAK SO BADLY OF HIM...
YOU DON'T THINK THE GHOSTS OF YOUR PAST WILL COME BACK TO HAUNT YOU FOR IT, DO YOU?

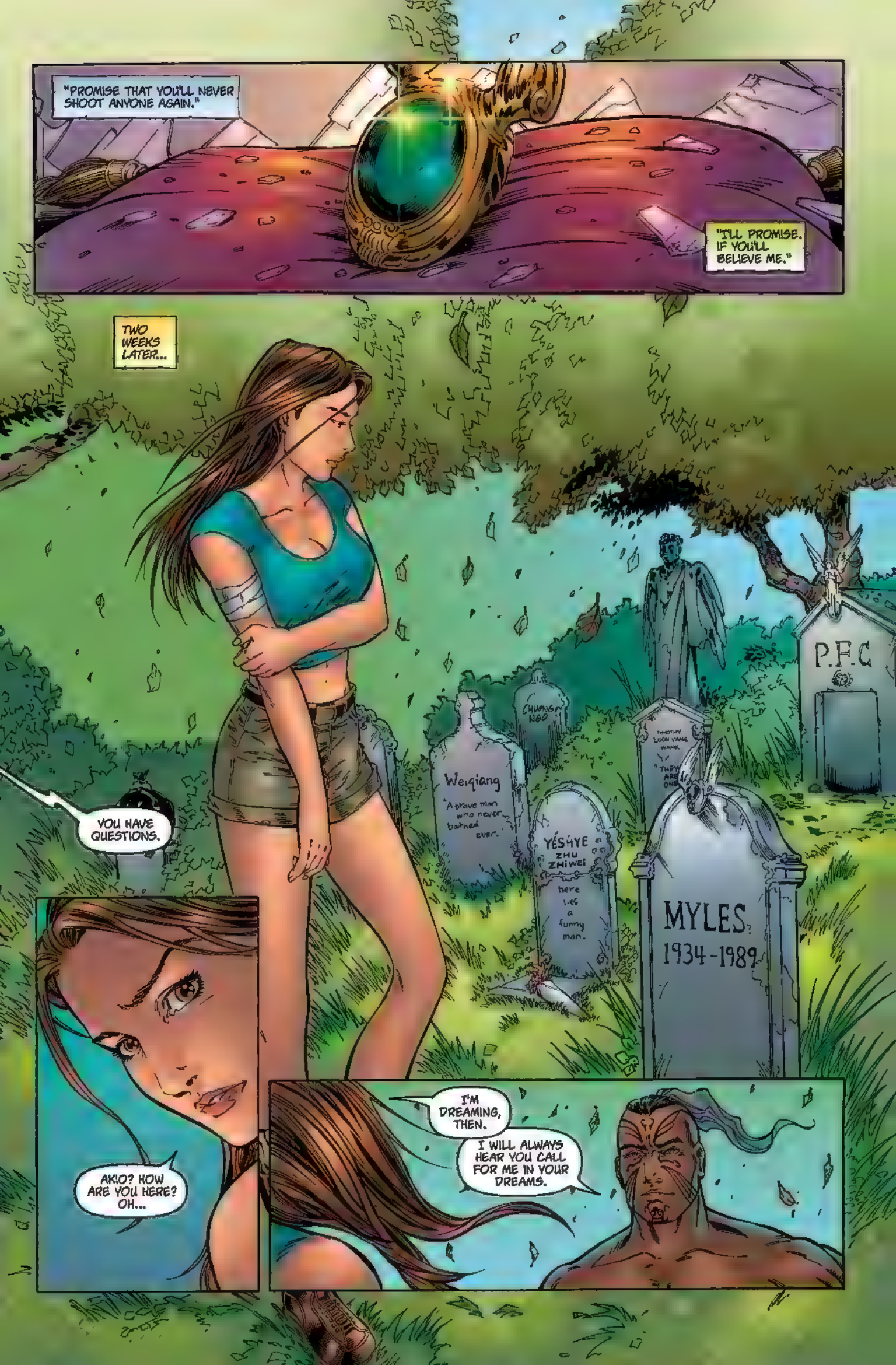
DO YOU KNOW WHO'S GUN THIS IS? DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
OH MY-- G-GOD!
I'M THE ONLY FAMILY THAT "EVIL MAN" EVER HAD. I WAS THERE THE DAY YOU KILLED HIM, CARLETON.
AND I SAW EVERYTHING YOU DID, THE MAPS YOU STOLE, THE INFORMATION YOU BRIBED FROM SOME OF OUR TRUSTED GUIDES.
I WAS ALWAYS ONE STEP AHEAD OF YOU BUT THAT DAY, I WASN'T FAST ENOUGH TO SAVE HIS LIFE.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO FIRE THAT THING IN TIME IF YOU KEEP PONTIFICATING LIKE THAT.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D KILL ANOTHER HUMAN BEING AGAIN. I PROMISED HIM THAT DAY WHILE HE DIED IN MY ARMS.
I... I... PROMISED HIM.

BLAM!!
THIS TIME...
KILL HER.
CH-CHOK!
BLAMMM!


HUGH—
HUH!!
GURRRLGGLELLGGGLLLE
THWUMP
I DIDN'T TOUCH IT. IT— THE MOKO— IT—
CRASH! CLANG! BAMM!
BLAM!
KSHHSHRAASHH!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON OUT THERE?


BLAM!
KAGAN!
I'VE BEEN WAITING A LEGION OF LIFETIMES FOR YOU TO LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT, LARA CROFT.

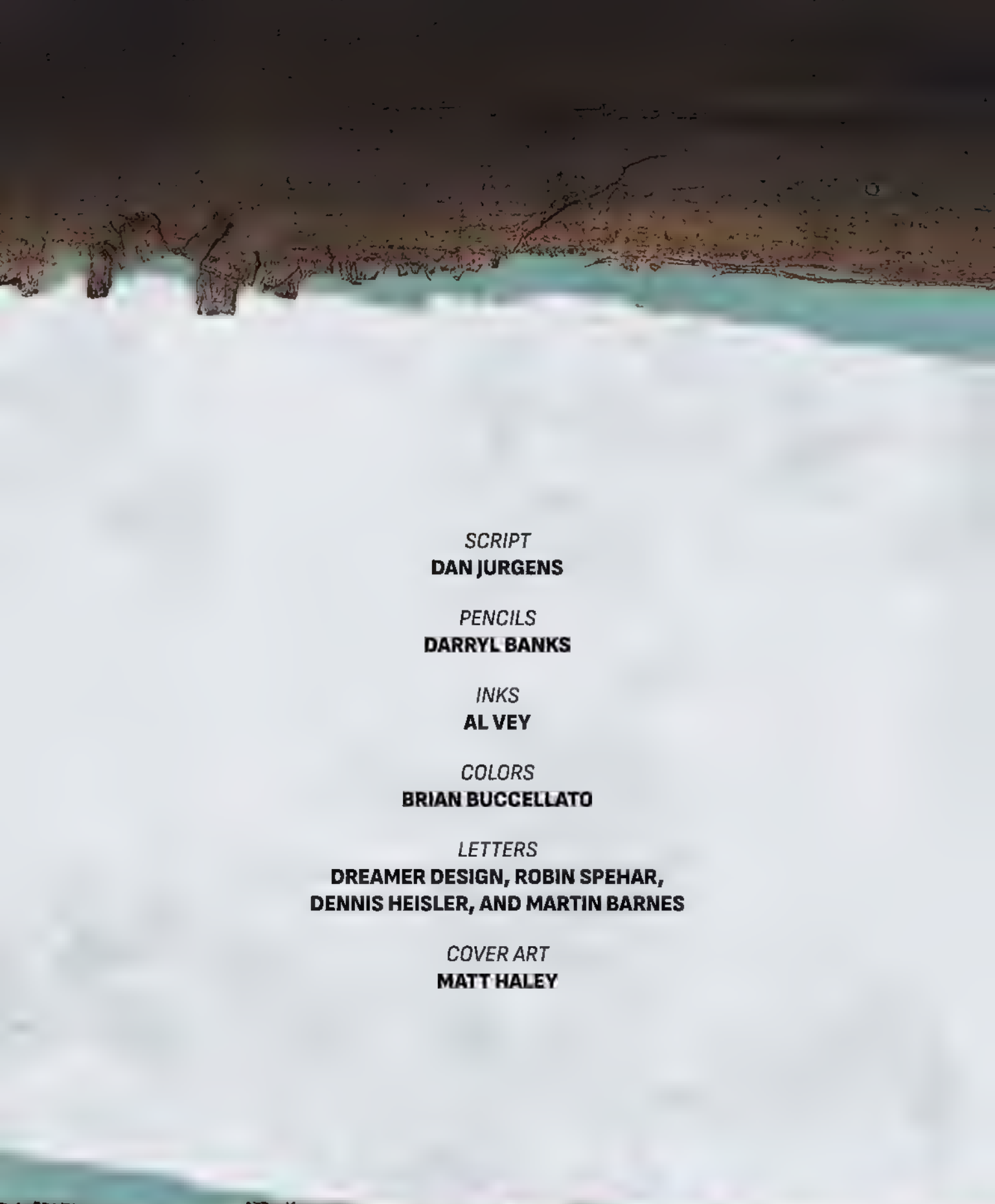

DID YOU SHOOT HIM?
OF COURSE NOT. MY HAND...
THERE WAS SOME REMAINING MOKO, THE TATTOO OF THE MAORI UNDERWORLD, STILL ON MY HAND AND WHEN THAT GUNMAN GRAZED MY HAND WITH A BULLET, I DROPPED MYLES' GUN...
I SAW THE GUN FIRE ON ITS OWN AS IT HIT THE GROUND. AND WHEN I LOOKED BACK AT MY HAND, THE MOKO WAS GONE.
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT MEANS?
I'M NOT SURE, BUT I THINK I HAVE A VAGUE IDEA.
WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE. BUT FIRST, KAGAN, I WANT YOU TO PROMISE ME SOMETHING.


"PROMISE THAT YOU'LL NEVER SHOOT ANYONE AGAIN."
"I'LL PROMISE. IF YOU'LL BELIEVE ME."
TWO WEEKS LATER...
YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.
AKIO? HOW ARE YOU HERE? OH...
I'M DREAMING, THEN.
I WILL ALWAYS HEAR YOU CALL FOR ME IN YOUR DREAMS.
P.F.C
CHUNG NGO
Weiqiang
A brave man who never bathed ever.
YÉSHYE ZHU ZHIWEI
here lies a funny man.
MYLES
1934-1989

THAT PART OF THE MOKO THAT STAYED ON MY HAND. IT WAS...
IT WAS HIM, WASN'T IT? SOMEHOW.
THE MOKO IS A PATTERN THAT SPELLS OUT YOUR PERSONALITY, YOUR SPIRIT, YOUR UNIQUE BEING ACROSS YOUR BODY.
BUT THOSE WHO TOUCH OUR LIVES CLOSELY LEAVE THEIR IMPRINTS IN OUR THOUGHTS, WORDS, EVEN OUR HABITS.
MYLES KNEW THAT HE EXISTED SOMEWHERE WITHIN YOUR MOKO.
MY SUSPICION IS THAT HE USED HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE OF MAORI MAGICS TO SUSTAIN HIMSELF WITHIN YOUR MOKO JUST LONG ENOUGH TO HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON THE WAKING WORLD.
AND IN SO DOING, SEEK HIS REVENGE. HE REALLY DID PULL THE TRIGGER THEN.
HE TOLD YOU NEVER TO SHOOT ANOTHER PERSON EVER AGAIN, YES?
HE DID MAKE ME PROMISE THAT.
"THEN HE FOUND HIS OWN WAY TO AVENGE HIS DEATH AND STILL KEEP THE ONE TRAIT HE GAVE TO YOUR SPIRIT.
FAREWELL, LARA CROFT."
GOODBYE, AKIO.
GOODBYE, MYLES.
ES
989

I WILL NOT SEE YOU AGAIN, AND I WILL ALWAYS BE SEEING YOU.
MYLES
1934 - 1989
END.

EPIPHANY



SCRIPT
DAN JURGENS

PENCILS
DARRYL BANKS

INKS
AL VEY

COLORS
BRIAN BUCCELLATO

LETTERS
DREAMER DESIGN, ROBIN SPEHAR,
DENNIS HEISLER, AND MARTIN BARNES

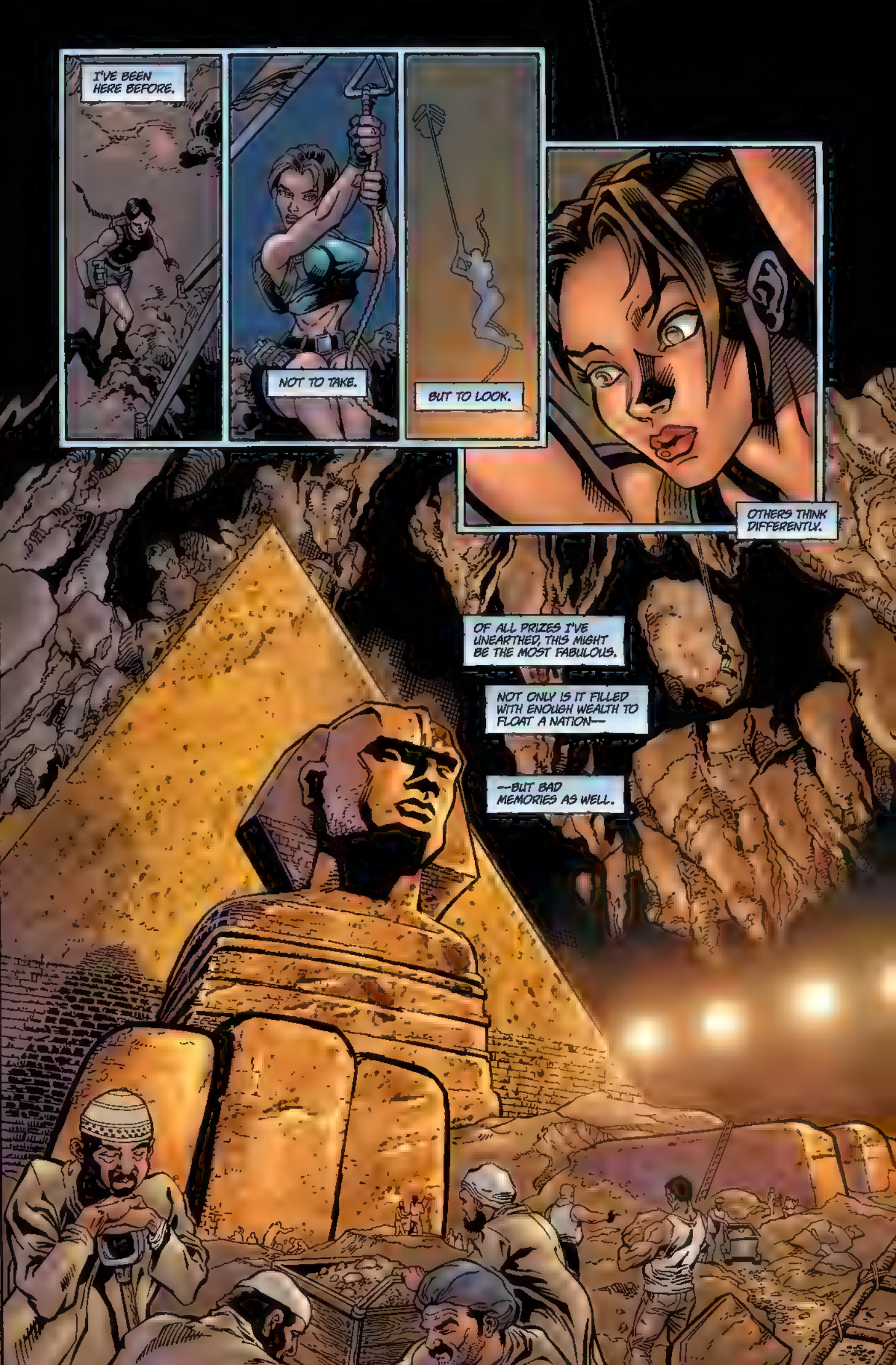
COVER ART
MATT HALEY

ABDUL! AT LAST, WE HAVE ARRIVED.
FINALLY. I COULD NOT BE MORE BORED, RAISHA.
SUCH IS THE LIFE OF A GUARD.
PHAH! WHAT DO I GUARD BUT SAND? PEOPLE COME AND GO, BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY DO!
THE LESS WE KNOW, THE BETTER.
YOU BROUGHT THE WHISKEY?
OF COURSE, ABDUL. AFTER ALL...
...I DO NOT WISH TO DIE OF BOREDOM OUT HERE.
COME, JUSEF! JOIN US BEFORE THE SOLDIERS BELOW COME TO GET THEIR SUPPLIES.
ALLAH KNOWS THEY ARE A HUMORLESS BUNCH!

DID YOU BRING FOOD?
I AM A SUPPLIER, NOT A CATERER!
BETTER HURRY, JUSEF--- BEFORE THIS FOOL DRAINS THE BOTTLE!
JUSEF! YOU KNOW THE RULES! WE ARE FORBIDDEN FROM LOOKING DOWN THERE!
COME AWAY BEFORE THEY SHOOT YOU!
LET THIS SATISFY YOUR CURIOSITY.
NO?
SINCE WHEN DOES JUSEF AL AKHIM TURN DOWN A DRINK?

YOUR FACE! REVEAL IT NOW!
WHUHF!
WHOEVER THAT IS, IT ISN'T JUSEF!
KILL HIM!
BRAKATAKAKT BRAKKAKAKT
I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO GUESS SO SOON.
CHUF
CHUFF
DON'T LET THE SUCCESS GO TO YOUR HEADS.

EGYPT.
MOST CONSIDER IT LONG PLUNDERED OF HISTORY'S GREATEST SECRETS AND TREASURES.
I KNOW BETTER.
I'M LARA CROFT.
AND I'VE BARELY STARTED.


I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE.
NOT TO TAKE.
BUT TO LOOK.
OTHERS THINK DIFFERENTLY.
OF ALL PRIZES I'VE UNEARTHED, THIS MIGHT BE THE MOST FABULOUS.
NOT ONLY IS IT FILLED WITH ENOUGH WEALTH TO FLOAT A NATION—
—BUT BAD MEMORIES AS WELL.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE VON CROY AND I WERE HERE.
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THIS PLACE WOULDN'T STAY SECRET.
HATE BEING SO COLD--
--BUT I CAN'T LET THESE FOOLS GET HOLD OF THE SCORPION STAFF.
AND THE ODDS AREN'T EXACTLY IN MY FAVOR.

MAKING MY APPEARANCE LESS OBVIOUS WILL HELP.
IF I'M LUCKY, THEY HAVEN'T FOUND THE EAST CHAMBER.
SO MUCH FOR LUCK.
RAHIM?
RAHIM! WHY AREN'T YOU AT YOUR POST?
CORRECTION. LUCK IS IN PLAY.
BAD LUCK.

HAVE TO HURRY... MAKE SURE I HIT THE 'GLYPHS IN THE PROPER SEQUENCE.
RAHIM, IF YOU DO NOT GET BACK TO YOUR POST, YOU ARE SURE TO BE BEHEADED!
RAHIM!
GOT IT.
CREEEEKT!
WHAT ARE YOU---?
TOO LATE, FRIEND. YOU MISSED YOUR CHANCE.
YOU ARE NOT RAHIM!
REAL MENSA MATERIAL.
WHOA.

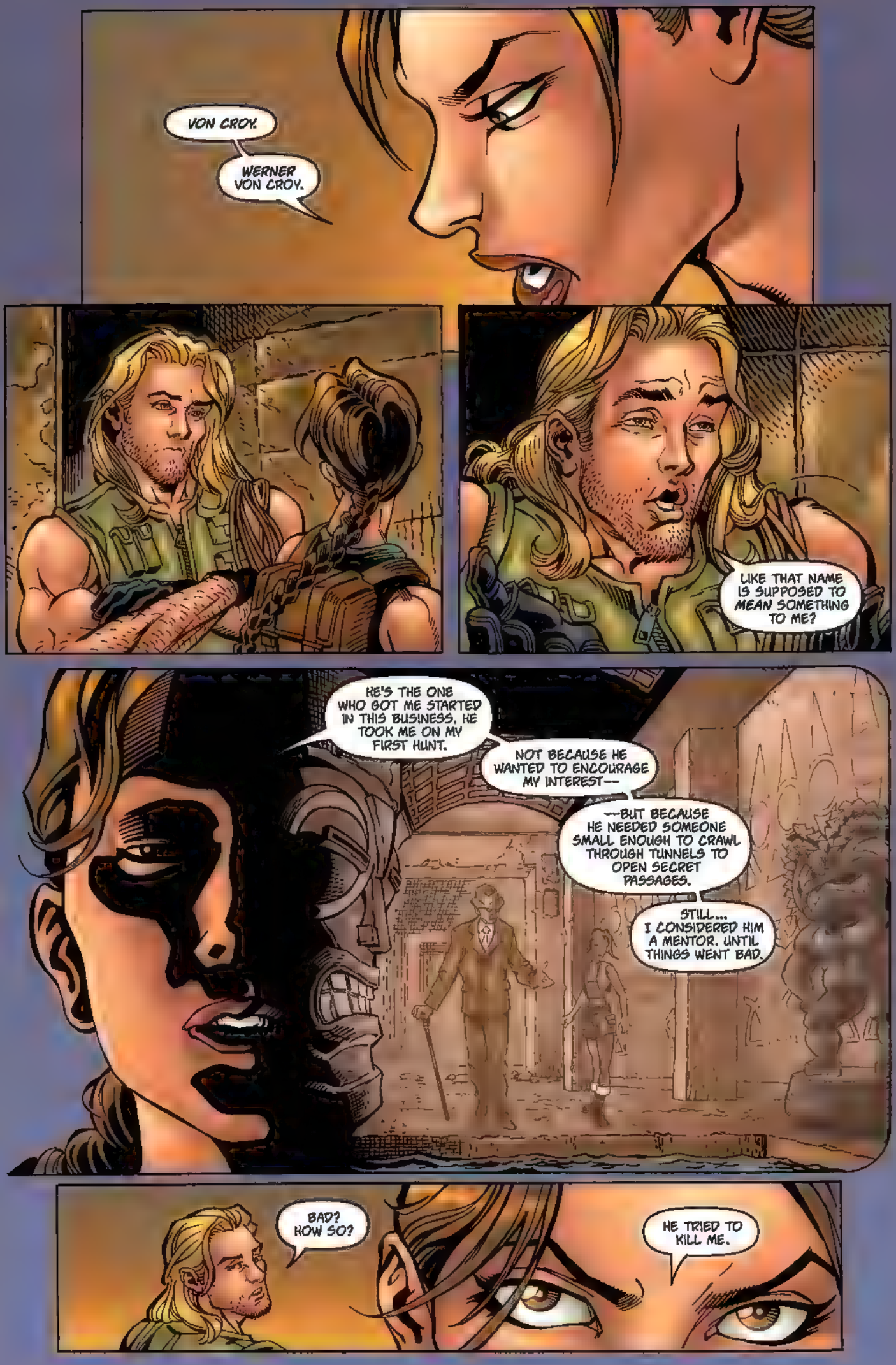
HOT.
SO HOT I CAN HARDLY BREATHE.
ABOUT TO GET HOTTER TOO.
THERE SHE IS! SHOOT HER!
PAK!
PAK!
BRRRRDT
SLASSSH!
MIGHT AS WELL PAINT A RED TARGET ON MY BACK.
I HAVE NO CHANCE.

UNLESS SOMETHING CHANGES.
CHAKKA TAKT!
FIRST RULE OF COMBAT:
WATCH YOUR FLANK.
TROUBLE'S LIABLE TO DROP OUT OF THE SKY AND BITE YOU IN THE BUTT.
CHAKKA TAKT TATAKT!
GRAB ON, LUV.
THAT BRIDGE IS SO OLD THOSE ROPES CAN'T POSSIBLY HOLD FOR LONG.

I'M NOT THE TYPE WHO LOOKS FOR A SAVIOR--
--BUT IN THIS CASE--
--I'LL TAKE IT.
UNGH. I ADMIRE THE FEMALE FIGURE A GREAT DEAL, BUT IF YOU WERE ANY BIGGER UP TOP--
--WE'D BE SWIMMING IN THE LAVA.
ANOTHER ONE.
ANOTHER WHAT?
SHARP TONGUED, DULL MINDED CHAUVINIST.
CLAYTON KASTERMAN AT YOUR SERVICE.
AND I'M ACTUALLY A DEEPLY SENSITIVE, CARING INDIVIDUAL.
I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT.
THINK THIS ROPE CAN HOLD US?

IF NOT, I'M SURE I CAN FIND YOU A POLE TO CLIMB.
WHAT HAPPENED TO SENSITIVE AND CARING?
I'M WORKING ON IT. THERAPIST, WEEKLY SUPPORT GROUP, 12 STEPS TO RECOVERY... THE WHOLE BIT!
IF YOU'D CARE TO BE MY SPONSOR...
GET YOUR MOTHER.
YOU HAVE NO SENSE OF HUMOR.

THIS PLACE IS AS SECRET AS IT GETS, KASTERMAN. WHAT'S YOUR STORY?
I'M A TREASURE HUNTER LIKE YOU. GOLD, JEWELS, RELICS... I WANT IT ALL.
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.
OF THE BEST TREASURE HUNTERS WHO EVER LIVED, ONLY ONE OR TWO KNOW OF ITS EXISTENCE, AND I'M ONE OF THEM.
AND YOU DON'T QUALIFY.
OKAY, OKAY. I GOT LUCKY.
I'M STUDYING IN A COLLEGE LIBRARY AND HAPPENED TO COME ACROSS THIS, Y'KNOW?
FIGURED I COULD SCORE BIG WITH IT.
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?
WHERE DID YOU GO TO COLLEGE?
OXFORD! WHAT'S WITH YOU?
I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE. IT WAS COPIED OFF HIS MAP!
WHOSE? WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?


VON CROY.
WERNER VON CROY.
LIKE THAT NAME IS SUPPOSED TO MEAN SOMETHING TO ME?
HE'S THE ONE WHO GOT ME STARTED IN THIS BUSINESS. HE TOOK ME ON MY FIRST HUNT.
NOT BECAUSE HE WANTED TO ENCOURAGE MY INTEREST--
--BUT BECAUSE HE NEEDED SOMEONE SMALL ENOUGH TO CRAWL THROUGH TUNNELS TO OPEN SECRET PASSAGES.
STILL... I CONSIDERED HIM A MENTOR. UNTIL THINGS WENT BAD.
BAD? HOW SO?
HE TRIED TO KILL ME.

NICE GUY. WHY'D HE WANT TO KILL A KID?
IT WAS LATER.
HERE. IN THIS VERY TOMB.
HEY. IS IT JUST ME... OR IS IT GETTING HOTTER IN HERE?
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
WHOOOMM!
MOVE IT!
YOU'RE THE BOSS! LEAD THE WAY!
KEEP MOVING. IT'LL BE ON OUR HEELS SOON.
WHAT IF WE CAN'T OUTRUN IT?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WE HAVE TO GO UP! NOT DOWN!

ARE YOU NUTS?
WE EITHER GET TORCHED BY THE LAVA OR SLICED AND DICED BY THE BLADES!
WHAT KIND OF MADHOUSE IS THIS?
A MADHOUSE THAT DOESN'T GIVE YOU TIME TO THINK.
YOU HAVE TO ACT.
PROVE YOU'RE WORTHY.
ONLY THEN--
PONG! PANG!
--DO YOU GET THE GOODS. GIVE ME THE ROPE.
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS--!
IF THE ROPE DOESN'T APPEAL TO YOU--
--GO CLIMB THAT POLE YOU'RE SO FOND OF.

UGH!
YOUR TURN.
I CAN'T—!
YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.
GUESS NOT.

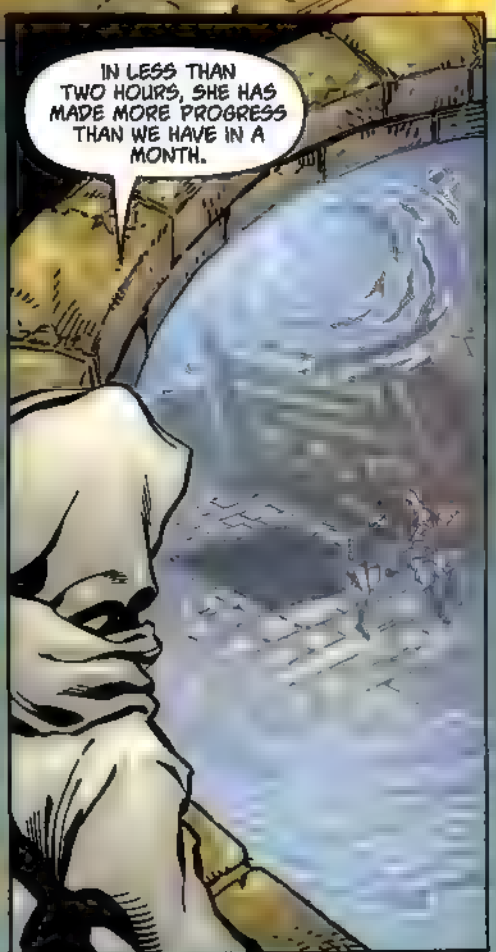
AIIII--
--AIIII--
AIIII--
AIIII--
--AIIII!
MADE IT!
WHA...
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
PULL ME IN!
I'VE BEEN BURNED
BY TOO MANY PEOPLE, TOO MANY TIMES.
TH-THANKS!
BY GUYS LIKE THAT VON CROY CHARACTER YOU MEAN?

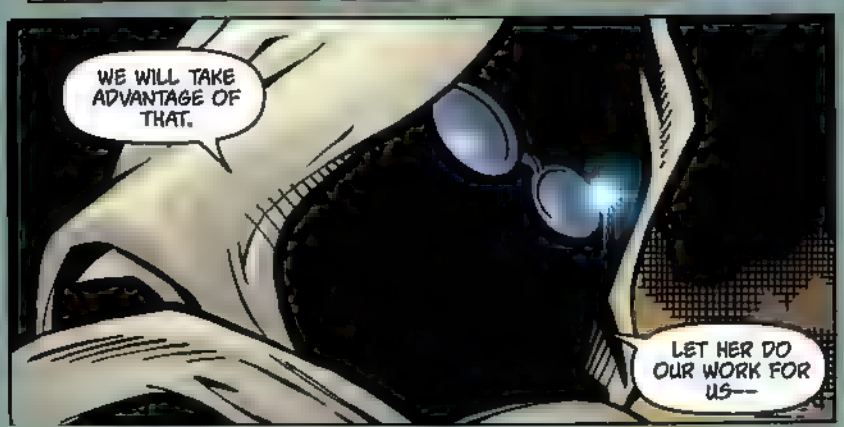
HIM...
...AND MORE.
SO YOU DON'T TRUST ME?
NO WAY. NOT YET.
IN THIS BUSINESS, YOU TRUST NOTHING AND NO ONE.
WHAT'S ALL THAT?
WEIGHT SENSITIVE TILES.
LAND ON THE WRONG ONE—
—AND GAS—
—VENOMOUS SPIDERS—
—OR POISONOUS SNAKES WILL BE ON YOU BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.
THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T TRUST ANY SITUATION. IT'LL SURELY PLANT A KNIFE IN YOUR BACK.
JUST LIKE PEOPLE.
PEOPLE LIKE YOU, PERHAPS.

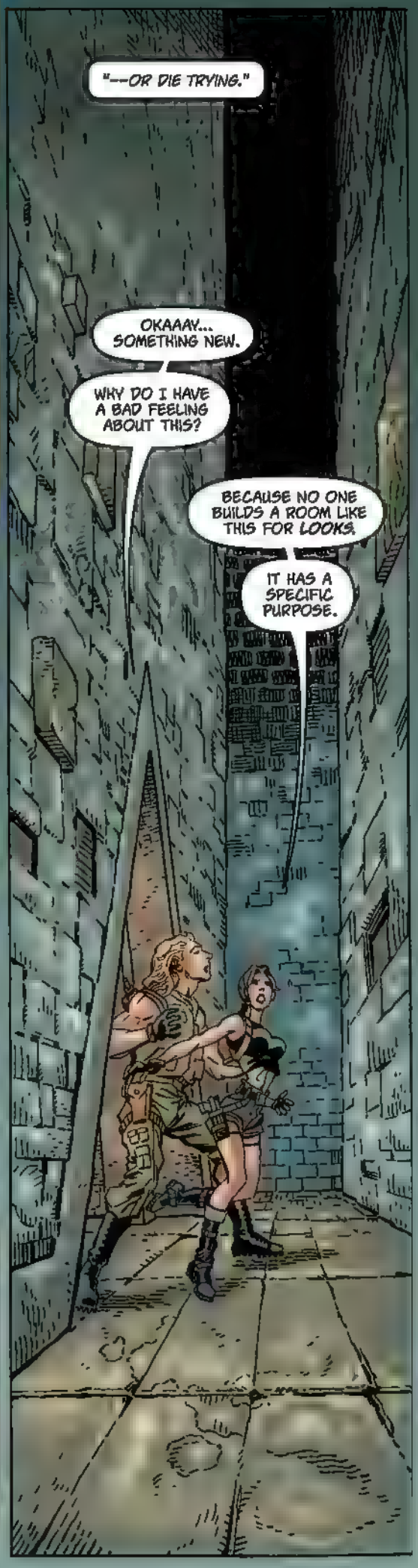
HOW DID YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO BACK THERE?
DO THIS LONG ENOUGH, KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN AND YOU'LL LEARN THE TRICKS.
IF YOU SURVIVE.
SO WHY DON'T YOU TRUST ME? I HAVEN'T BURNED YOU.
TRUE.
SO FAR.
AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, NOTHING-- MAN OR OTHERWISE-- IS WHAT IT SEEMS TO BE.
THERE'S TROUBLE AROUND EVERY CORNER.
THUMP!
FATAL TROUBLE.

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND, MISTRESS. CROFT IS HERE. SHOULD WE NOT KILL HER NOW?
OR AT LEAST SUBDUE HER?

NOT YET. NOT UNTIL THEY FIND THE SCORPION STAFF.


IN LESS THAN TWO HOURS, SHE HAS MADE MORE PROGRESS THAN WE HAVE IN A MONTH.


WE WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT.
LET HER DO OUR WORK FOR US--


"--OR DIE TRYING."
OKAAAY... SOMETHING NEW.
WHY DO I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS?
BECAUSE NO ONE BUILDS A ROOM LIKE THIS FOR LOOKS.
IT HAS A SPECIFIC PURPOSE.

LIKE KILLING US?
YOU'RE LEARNING.
IT DOESN'T GO ANYWHERE. THERE'S NO WAY OUT.
YES. IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE A LOCKED DOOR.
BUT EVERY LOCK---
NICE! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS CLIMB TO THE TOP?
CAREFUL.
IT'S NOT AS EASY AS IT LOOKS.
---HAS A KEY.

THE STEPS SLIDE BACK?
WHICH IS WHY YOU HAVE TO HURRY.
WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE GET TO THE TOP?
ASSUMING WE MAKE IT, THAT IS!
WE'LL FIGURE IT OUT WHEN WE GET THERE.
LOOK OUT!

WATCH YOUR STEP.
IT'S NOT THE STEPS I'M WORRIED ABOUT!
OH---
UH!
--SH--!

GREAT! NOW WE'RE BOTH DEAD!
NOT YET.
JEEEZ--!
ARE YOU CRAZY?
NO CRAZIER THAN YOU!
CLIMB! ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP!

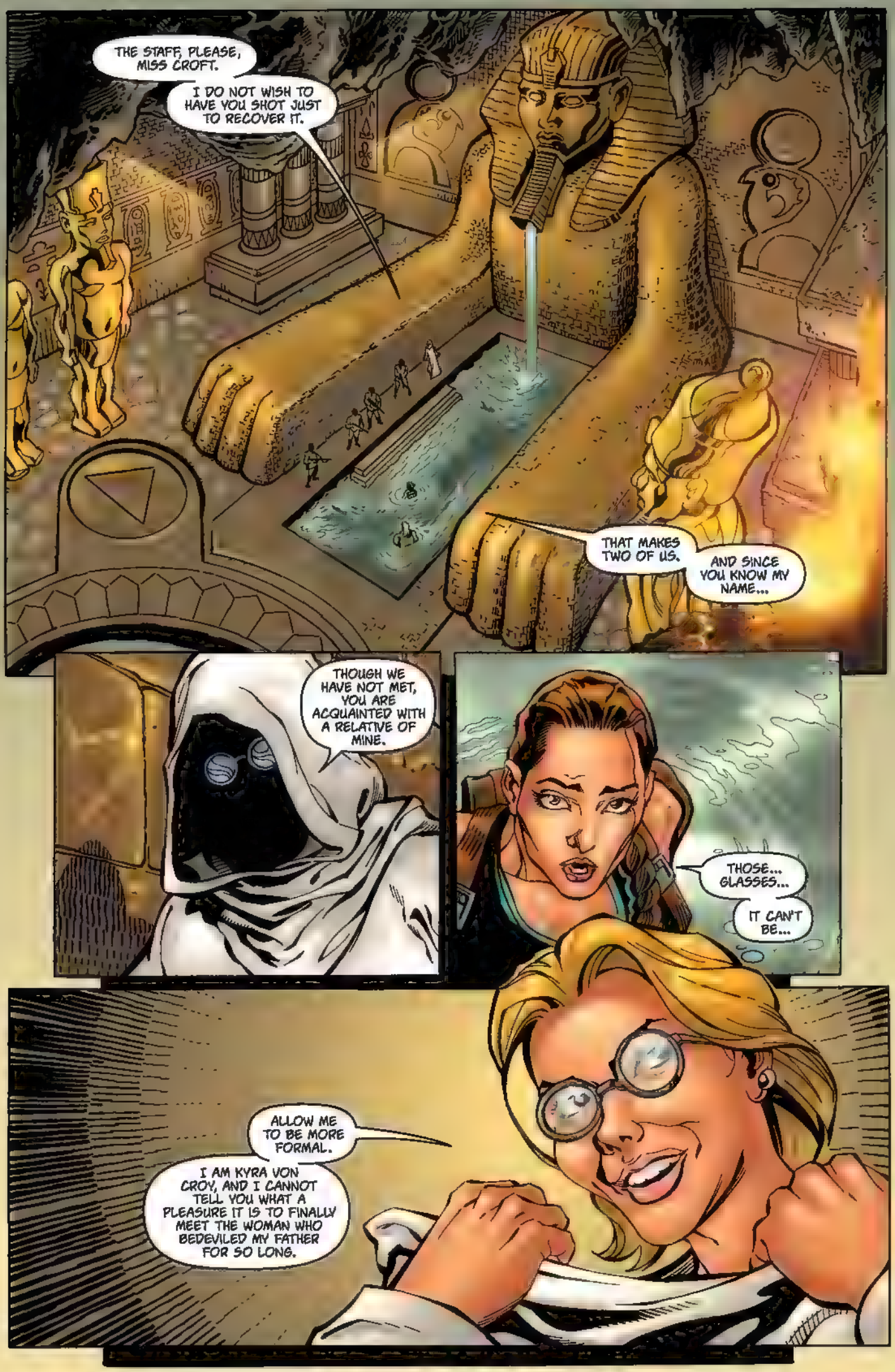
THIS IS THE WAY OUT?
I TOLD YOU WE'D FIGURE IT WHEN...
...WE...
...GET... THERE...
WHAT'S WRONG? CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?
WHOA! TREASURE CITY!
LOOKS LIKE A LOT OF PEOPLE MADE IT THIS FAR.
WHAT DO YOU THINK KILLED THEM? POISON SPIDERS?
THESE AREN'T TREASURE HUNTERS, CLAY.
YEAH? WHAT ARE THEY?

KRIKK!
MOVE.
WHY? CAN'T YOU JUST SHOOT THEM?
HARD TO KILL WHAT'S ALREADY DEAD
GUARDS.
KARAKAK
WE'RE BLOCKED!
NO WE'RE NOT. KEEP GOING!

I REFUSE TO BURN TO DEATH!
HAVE IT YOUR WAY.
KARAKKAK!
ON THE OTHER HAND...
LARA?
WHERE ARE YOU?
WHERE---?
AAHHHH!

SPLOSH!
AMAZINGLY ENOUGH, THE CHUMP ACTUALLY CAUGHT UP TO ME.
THE UNDERTOW IS SO STRONG THAT THERE'S NO WAY EITHER OF US CAN GET BACK TO THE SURFACE.
IF HE DOESN'T PANIC AND CAN HOLD HIS BREATH FOR A MINUTE OR SO, HE MIGHT SURVIVE.
PROVIDED WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR IS INSIDE THIS SARCOPHAGUS.
IF NOT—
—WE DROWN.

VRUMMMMM!
VRUMMMMM!
SKAMMM!
THUNK!
THE SCORPION STAFF!
YOU FOUND IT!
INDEED YOU DID. AND I WILL BE DELIGHTED TO TAKE IT FROM YOU.


THE STAFF, PLEASE, MISS CROFT.
I DO NOT WISH TO HAVE YOU SHOT JUST TO RECOVER IT.
THAT MAKES TWO OF US.
AND SINCE YOU KNOW MY NAME...
THOUGH WE HAVE NOT MET, YOU ARE ACQUAINTED WITH A RELATIVE OF MINE.
THOSE... GLASSES...
IT CAN'T BE...
ALLOW ME TO BE MORE FORMAL.
I AM KYRA VON CROY, AND I CANNOT TELL YOU WHAT A PLEASURE IT IS TO FINALLY MEET THE WOMAN WHO BEDEVILED MY FATHER FOR SO LONG.

IT'S A SHAME TO THINK OF THAT WARPED, OLD BASTARD REPRODUCING.
AFTER ALL HE TAUGHT YOU, YOU STILL HOLD A GRUDGE. HOW THANKLESS.
THE STAFF, CROFT.
NOW.
NO.
SHOOT HER.
A PLEASURE!
OKAY, OKAY.
DEALING WITH ONE VON CROY WAS BAD ENOUGH. TWO?
THAT'S A SITUATION I'LL HAVE TO REMEDY.
AH. AND IF THERE WERE THREE?
KYRA! DON'T—!

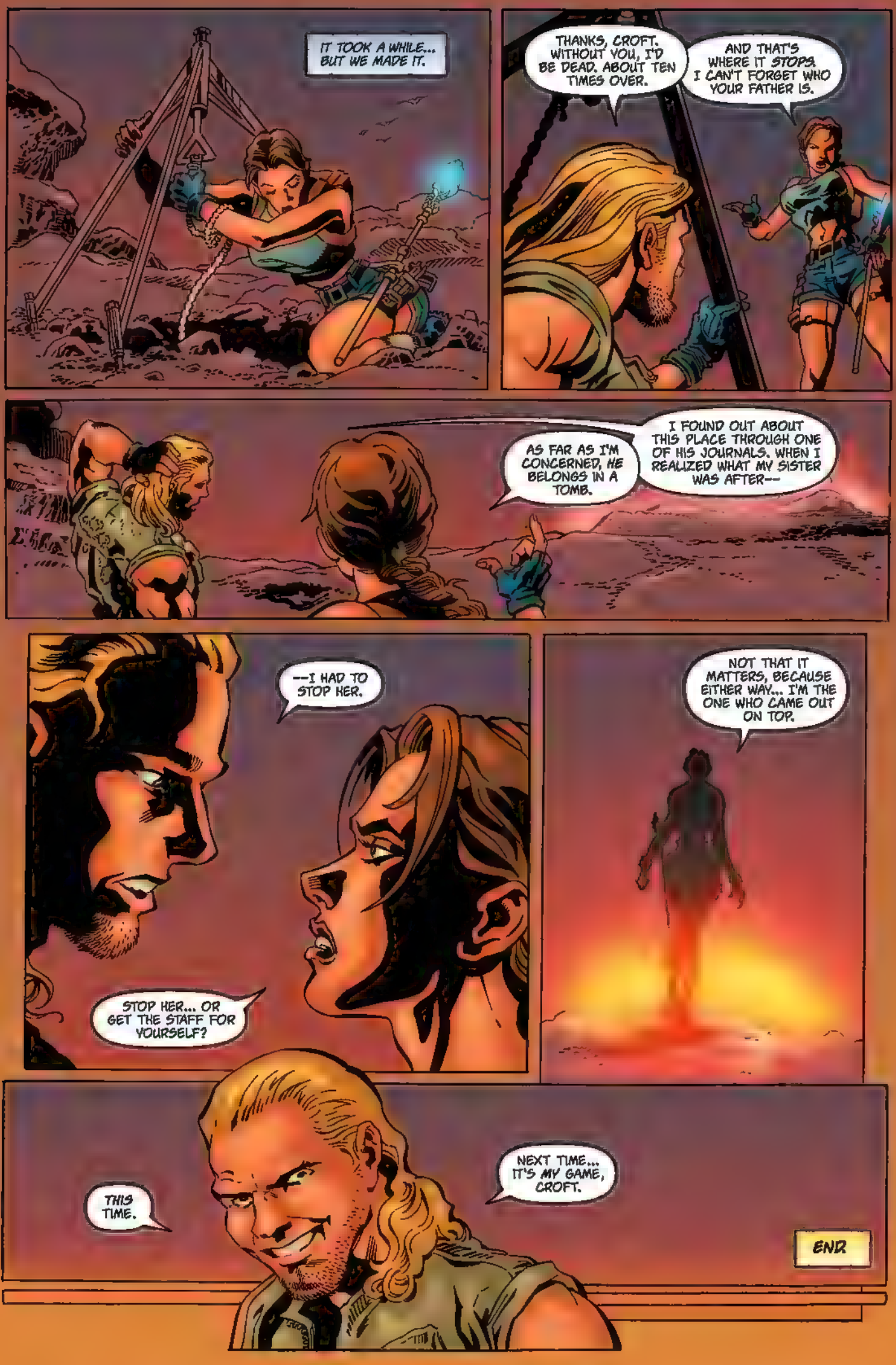
YOU TOO?
NO... I---!
LOOK INSIDE HIS COLLAR. THE PROOF IS THERE.
CVC? CLAYTON VON CROY?!
C.V.C.
WAIT! I'M NOT---!
SHUT UP.
I'M NOTHING LIKE THEM! I SWEAR IT!
YOU LIED TO ME. PRETENDED YOU WERE SOMEONE YOU WEREN'T.
YOU ARE EXACTLY LIKE HIM!

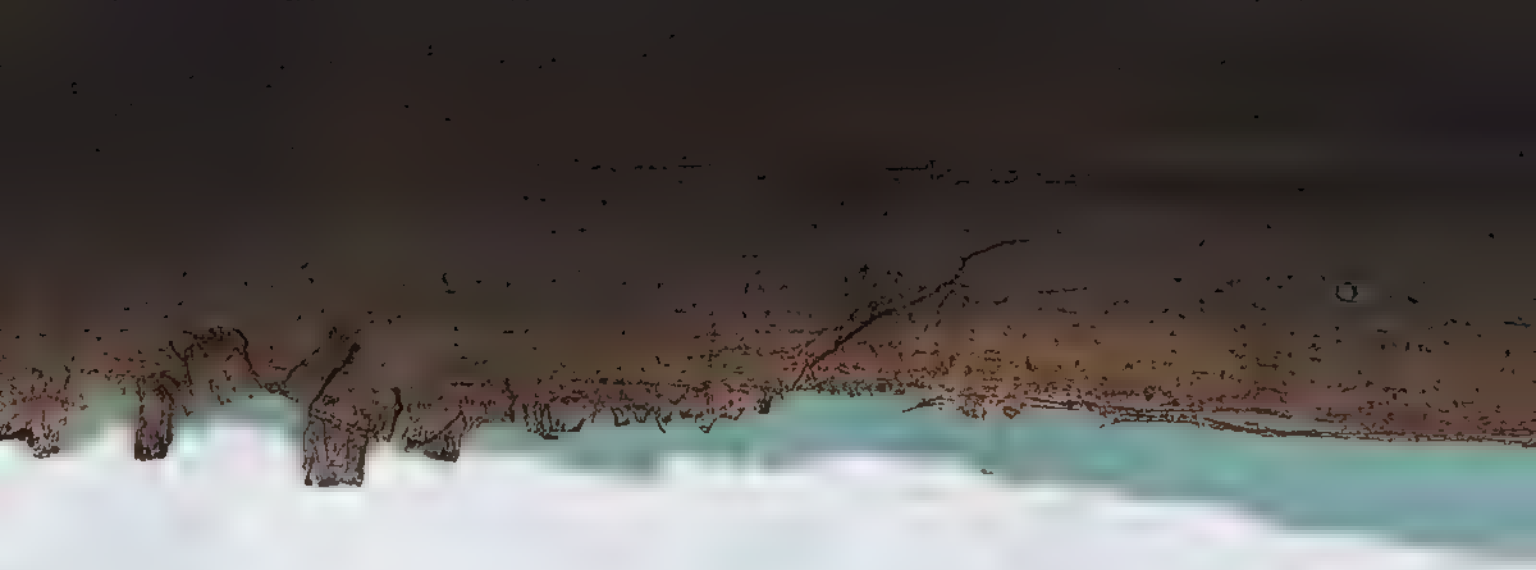
IF I HAD TOLD YOU MY REAL NAME YOU WOULD HAVE SHOT ME ON THE SPOT!
I WANTED TO STOP KYRA, BUT NOW YOU'VE GIVEN HER THE STAFF... AND ALL THE POWER THAT GOES WITH IT!
HE KNOWS DAMN WELL I PULLED THE JEWEL.
HE ISN'T SIDING WITH HER... YET.
AND IT'S NOT JUST HAVING IT--
I HAVE WHAT I WANT. KILL HER.
IT ISN'T THE STAFF YOU NEED...
...IT'S THE JEWEL.
--IT'S GETTING OUT ALIVE!

YOU— BITCH!
IT'S WRITTEN THAT, "WHOSOEVER HOLDS THE STAFF OF SCORPIONS CONTROLS THE JEWEL AND WIELDS THE POWER!"
YOU'RE A BIGGER BUST THAN YOUR OLD MAN, VON CROY! NO WONDER HE NEEDED ME TO DO HIS WORK FOR HIM!
THAT HAD TO IRRITATE YOU, RIGHT?
INSTEAD OF TAKING YOU ON HIS QUESTS, HE TOOK ME!
BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T MEASURE UP!
GIVE ME THAT!
BRRRTT!
YOU IDIOT!

CHAKT
CHAKKTA
CHAKT
CHAKKTA
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
RUN, LARA!
WE ALL HAVE TO RUN.

YOU HAVEN'T READ ANY OF THE WRITINGS, HAVE YOU?
LIKE--- "HARM THE GUARDIAN AND EVERYONE WITHIN SHALL PERISH?"
YOU'RE PLAYING WITH FIRE---
---AND YOU'RE TOO BUSY POURING GASOLINE ALL OVER YOURSELF TO REALIZE IT!
COME ON!
SPLASH!


IT TOOK A WHILE... BUT WE MADE IT.
THANKS, CROFT. WITHOUT YOU, I'D BE DEAD. ABOUT TEN TIMES OVER.
AND THAT'S WHERE IT STOPS. I CAN'T FORGET WHO YOUR FATHER IS.
I FOUND OUT ABOUT THIS PLACE THROUGH ONE OF HIS JOURNALS. WHEN I REALIZED WHAT MY SISTER WAS AFTER--
AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, HE BELONGS IN A TOMB.
--I HAD TO STOP HER.
STOP HER... OR GET THE STAFF FOR YOURSELF?
NOT THAT IT MATTERS, BECAUSE EITHER WAY... I'M THE ONE WHO CAME OUT ON TOP.
THIS TIME.
NEXT TIME... IT'S MY GAME, CROFT.
END



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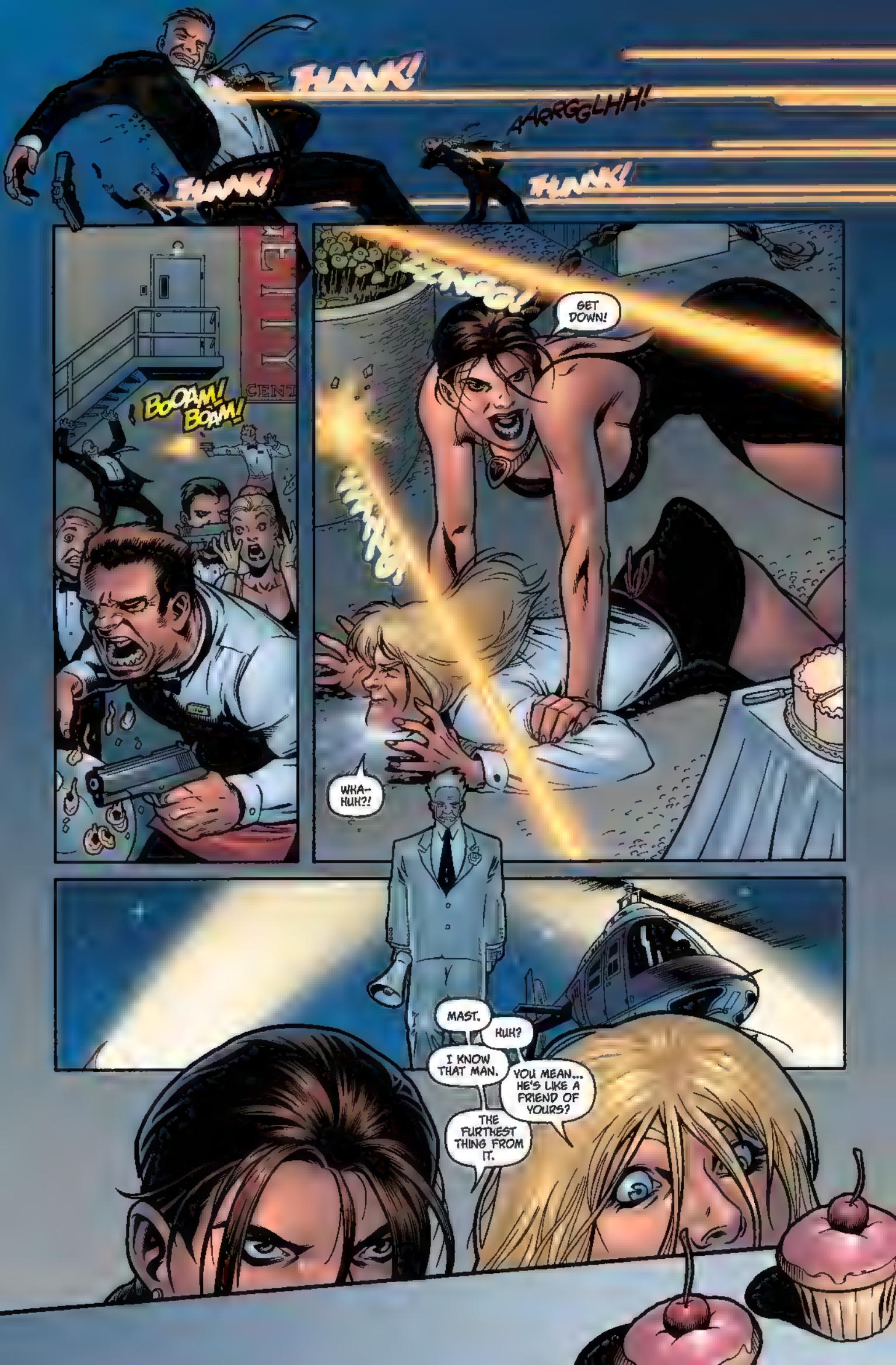
Getty Center Drive
I'VE NEVER FELT ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE IN LOS ANGELES. OTHER PARTS OF CALIFORNIA, IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY. BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON, L.A. DOESN'T QUITE AGREE WITH ME.
MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR.
I'VE COME HERE TO COMPLETE A JOURNEY. THOUGH NOT MY OWN.
THE JOURNEY OF THE DELPHI STONE.
THE PRICELESS GEM WAS EN ROUTE FROM ATHENS TO THE GETTY MUSEUM IN LOS ANGELES WHEN IT WAS STOLEN. MANY ARMED GUARDS WERE KILLED.
I HAPPENED UPON THE STONE WHEN I ENCOUNTERED THE THIEVES IN VENICE. I WALKED AWAY. THEY DIDN'T.
I AGREED TO DELIVER THE DELPHI STONE IN PERSON...
THE MUSEUM INSISTED ON HOSTING A WELCOMING CEREMONY...
I INSISTED THAT IT BE A RELATIVELY LOW-KEY AFFAIR...
BUT I GUESS ALL THINGS ARE RELATIVE. ESPECIALLY IN L.A.

WITHOUT MY GUNS, I FEEL...
MS. CROFT! THERE YOU ARE!
I'M LAWRENCE NASH, THE CURATOR. WELCOME.
AND IS THAT...?
THE DELPHI STONE. I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND THAT I WORE IT... BUT IT WENT SO WELL WITH MY ENSEMBLE.
IT'S TRULY DAZZLING. WE ALL OWE YOU A DEBT, WHICH CAN NEVER BE REPAID.
TELL YOU WHAT, LAWRENCE. CALL THIS WHOLE THING OFF, AND I'LL CALL IT EVEN.
HAH! YOU HAVE A FABULOUS SENSE OF HUMOR, MS. CROFT! TRULY!
THE SENATOR IS DUE TO ARRIVE BY HELICOPTER AT ANY MINUTE. JUST AS SOON AS SHE DOES, WE'LL BEGIN THE CEREMONY.
I'VE NEVER MUCH LIKED BEING STARED AT. BUT WHO DOES?
MOVIE STARS, PERHAPS. BUT EVEN FOR THEM, IT MUST GROW TIRESOME RATHER QUICKLY.
WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD WANT TO BE FAMOUS ANYWAY?
HEY...!
OHMYGOD! SORRY! SOR-RY!

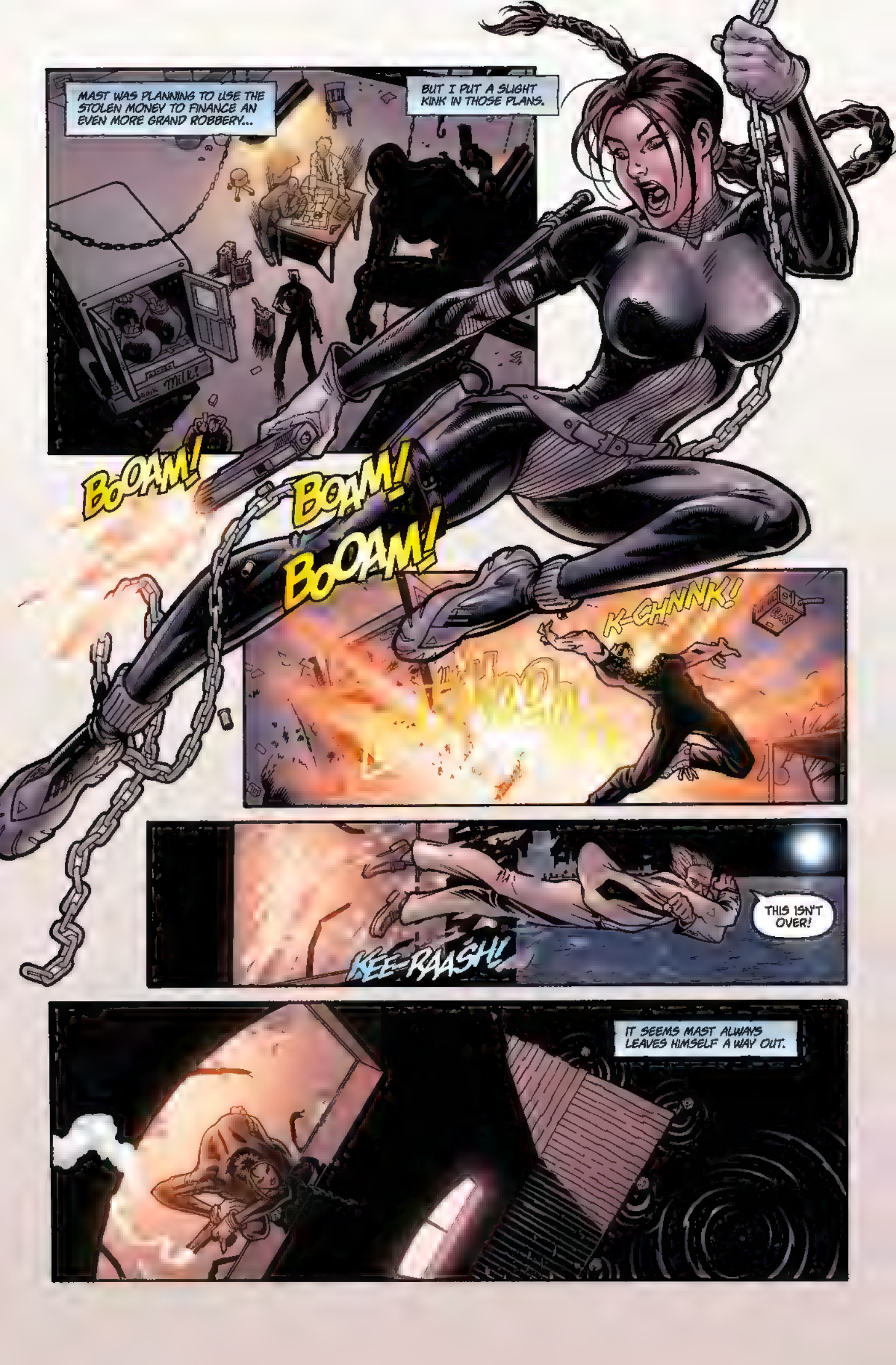
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
WHOOMPH!
I FELL LIKE I'M COMING DOWN WITH A COLD... "AH-CHEW!" AND I WASN'T EVEN SUPPOSED TO WORK TONIGHT...
IT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT, DEAR. NO REAL HARM DONE.
HONESTLY, I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'M EVEN AT SOMETIMES. HAVE YOU EVER FELT THAT WAY? WELL, I HAVE.
BUT A BUNCH OF PEOPLE CALLED IN SICK, SO WHO GETS CALLED IN TO WORK, YOURS TRULY. THEY EVEN HAD TO BRING IN SOME TOTALLY NEW PEOPLE TO HELP OUT...
I'M REALLY AN ACTRESS...
I'M GUESSING THAT'S NOT THE SENATOR'S HELICOPTER.
BLAAAMMM!
BLAAAMMM!
BLAAAAMMMM!


THWK!
THWK!
AARRGGLHH!
THWK!
BOOM! BOOM!
BANG!
GET DOWN!
WHA- HUH?!
MAST.
HUH?
I KNOW THAT MAN.
YOU MEAN... HE'S LIKE A FRIEND OF YOURS?
THE FURTHEST THING FROM IT.

I APOLOGIZE FOR DROPPING IN UNINVITED LIKE THIS. I AM EDGAR MAST, AND AT THIS MOMENT, I HOLD ALL OF YOUR LIVES IN THE PALM OF MY HAND.
ANYONE WHO ISN'T LYING FACE DOWN ON THE GROUND IN THREE SECONDS WILL BE SHOT.
ONE... TWO...
...THREE.
A VERY PROMISING START.
NOW FIND LARA CROFT...
...AND BRING ME THE DELPHI STONE.
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY FIND ME.
OHMYGOD, YOU'RE LARA CROFT?
I CAN'T BELIEVE I DUMPED A TRAY OVER THE GUEST OF HONOR.
THEY'LL FIRE ME IF THEY FIND OUT.
THEY WON'T HEAR IT FROM ME.
HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THIS MUSEUM?
I'VE WORKED A BUNCH OF PARTIES HERE.
IS THERE A SERVICE CORRIDOR NEARBY?
THERE'S ONE THROUGH THOSE GLASS DOORS.
YOU'D BETTER COME WITH ME THEN, MISS...?
LIZZY. LIZZY ZORKA.
DELIGHTFUL TO MEET YOU, LIZZY ZORKA. NOW TRY NOT TO GET SHOT.
THERE SHE IS!

IKKE-RRAASH!
TOLD YOU IT WASN'T OVER, SWEET-CHEEKS.
I SAW 'EM GO DOWN THIS WAY!
WE'D BETTER NOT LOSE 'EM!
I'M SAVING AN EXTRA BULLET IN CASE WE DO!
SO HOW EXACTLY DO YOU KNOW THIS MAST GUY?
HE KILLED A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE...

A FEW YEARS AGO, EDGAR MAST MASTERMINDED AN ELABORATE TAKEOVER BANK ROBBERY IN LONDON.
ONE OF THE HOSTAGES WAS ANNIE RICHARDSON. WE WERE SCHOOLMATES FROM MY DAYS AT GORDONSTOUN, AND WE MANAGED TO STAY IN TOUCH OVER THE YEARS. SOMETHING I RARELY MANAGED TO DO...
ANNIE WAS A FINANCE OFFICER AT THE BANK... AND EIGHT MONTHS PREGNANT WITH HER FIRST CHILD.
WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THE ROBBERY, I HURRIED TO THE SCENE. AND JUST AS I GOT THERE...
KA-WOOMMM!
MAST AND HIS MEN TRIGGERED THEIR EXPLOSIVES...
THERE WERE NO SURVIVORS...
BUT NEITHER WERE THERE ANY SIGNS OF THE ROBBERS' REMAINS FOUND IN THE RUBBLE.
I MADE IT MY MISSION TO TRACK MAST DOWN.


MAST WAS PLANNING TO USE THE STOLEN MONEY TO FINANCE AN EVEN MORE GRAND ROBBERY...
BUT I PUT A SLIGHT KINK IN THOSE PLANS.
BOOAM!
BOAM!
BOOAM!
K-GHNNK!
THIS ISN'T OVER!
KEE-RAASH!
IT SEEMS MAST ALWAYS LEAVES HIMSELF A WAY OUT.

SO WHAT'S HIS WAY OUT THIS TIME, I WONDER?
OHMYGOD! YOU'RE LIKE, I DUNNO... LIKE SOME KINDA SUPERHERO OR SOMETHING!
YOU KNOW WHAT? I'LL BETCHA YOU COULD BE FAMOUS. NOT LIKE REALITY SHOW FAMOUS, I MEAN LIKE TALK SHOW FAMOUS! ALL YOU NEED IS A PUBLICIST!
YOU SERIOUS? YOU DON'T WANNA BE FAMOUS?
THAT'S PROBABLY THE SECOND TO THE LAST THING THAT I NEED. RIGHT BEFORE A BULLET IN THE HEAD.
WHO DOESN'T WANNA BE FAMOUS?!
TARGET SPOTTED IN SERVICE CORRIDOR 12...
TARGET HEADED TOWARD JUNCTURE 13...
ADVANCED TEAM, GUARD THE HOSTAGES! AWAIT THE FINAL CALL! THE REST OF YOU COME WITH ME!
IF WE CAN REACH THE SECURITY STATION, WE CAN MONITOR THEIR MOVEMENTS AND FIND OUT WHAT MAST IS AFTER.
WAIT. ISN'T HE AFTER YOU?
HE WANTS THE DELPHI STONE. IT'S PRICELESS, TO BE SURE. BUT IT STILL CAN'T BE ALL THAT HE'S AFTER.
THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING MORE FOR MAST TO HAVE TAKEN SUCH A BRAZEN RISK.
I DUNNO. SOME PEOPLE YOU JUST CAN'T FIGURE OUT. LIKE MY LAST BOYFRIEND...

STAY SHARP. THIS BROAD'S A LOT TOUGHER THAN SHE LOOKS.
CLAK-CLAK-CLAK!
BLOODY HELL. THEY'RE TRACKING US. THEY MUST HAVE SEIZED THE SECURITY STATION.
THERE'S SOME STAIRS BACK THAT WAY, COM'ON.
CLAK-CLAK-CLAK!
STAIRS
STAIRS
THOSE CUTIES GOTTA BE HERE SOMEWHERE. FIND 'EM.
AH-CHEW!
GOD BLESS YOU.
LIZZY!

WHERE'S YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND, HONEY?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, SIR... I HEARD THE SHOOTING OUTSIDE AND THOUGHT IT WISE TO TAKE COVER... AMONGST THIS MODERN ART. NOW KINDLY UNHAND ME!
I SAW YOU LEAVE THE PARTY WITH HER, TOOTS!
OH MY GOD! PLEASE DON'T KILL ME!
SHH. SAVE YOUR BREATH. I DON'T CONTROL YOUR FATE...
...LARA CROFT DOES.
BECAUSE IF SHE DOESN'T HAND THE DELPHI STONE IN FIVE SECONDS...
...THE WAITRESS DIES!
WAITRESS? FOR YOUR INFORMATION, BUDDY, I'M AN ACTRESS!
YOU COULD'VE FOOLED ME.
ONE... TWO... THREE... FOUR...
MAST!
YOU WIN.

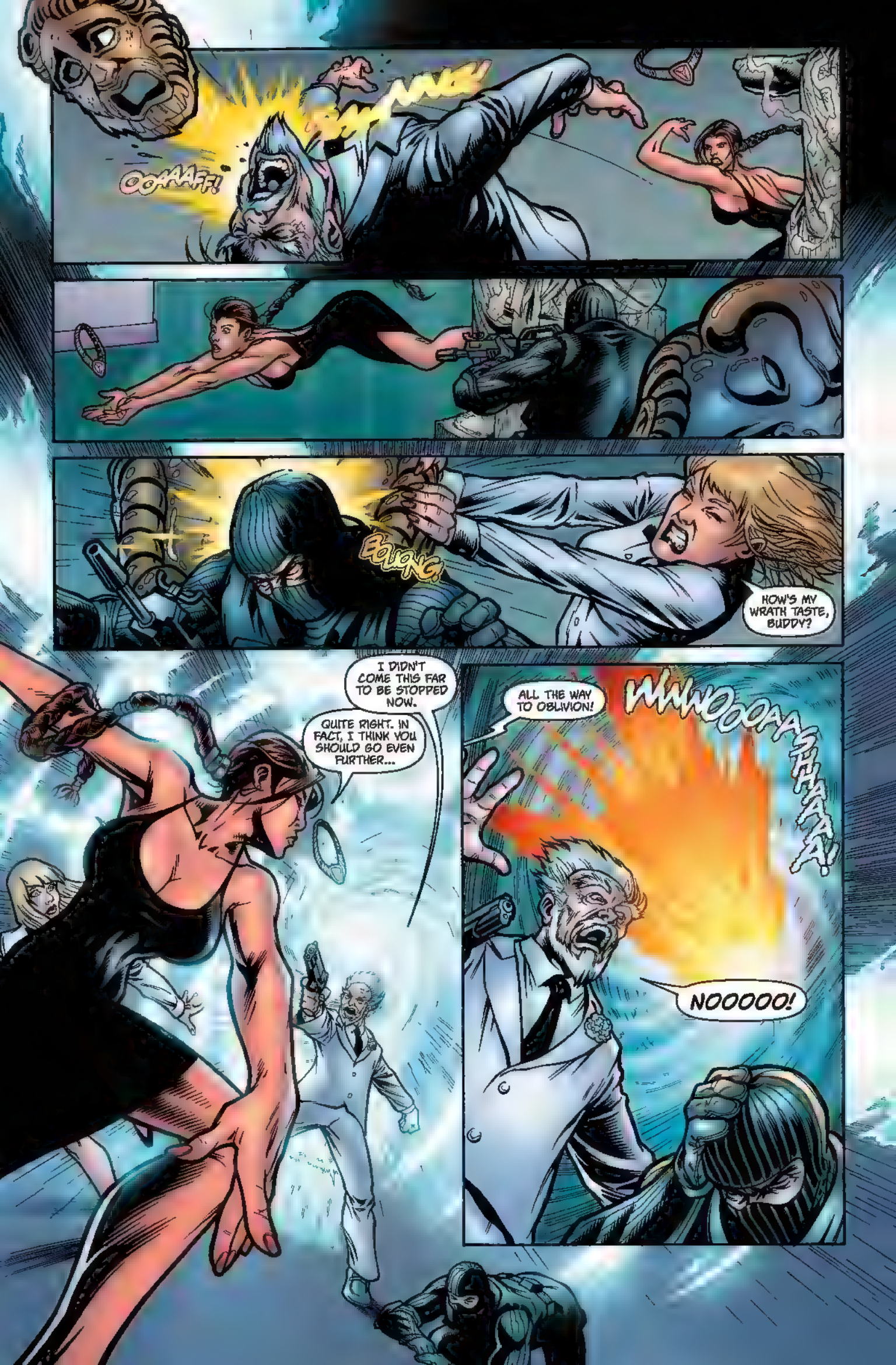
NOW, LET HER GO.
OF COURSE. I HAVE NO REASON TO KILL THIS WAITRESS.
ACTRESS.
YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE GIVEN ME SEVERAL REASONS.
YOU INTERFERED WITH MY OPERATION IN LONDON...
JUST AS YOU INTERFERED WITH MY OPERATIVES IN VENICE...
SO CONSIDER THIS PAYBACK, BABY!
BAAM!
BAAMM!
BAMM!
NOW IT'S OVER.
WE'RE HALFWAY HOME, BOYS. LEAVE THE HOSTAGES BEHIND AND MEET US IN THE ANCIENT GREECE WING...

LARA...?
MIND GIVING ME A HAND UP, LOVE?

I THINK I KNOW HOW MAST INTENDS TO MAKE HIS GETAWAY.
HE MUST KNOW ABOUT THE ANCIENT LEGEND OF THE ORACLE ALTAR...
IT WAS SAID THAT THE HIGH PRIESTESS OF DELPHI WAS ABLE TO TRAVEL GREAT DISTANCES IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
BY WEARING THE DELPHI STONE, THE HIGH PRIESTESS NEEDED ONLY TO PICTURE HER DESTINATION IN HER MIND AND THEN TOUCH THE ORACLE ALTAR...
AND SHE WOULD BE TRANSPORTED, ALONG WITH THE ALTAR AND ANYONE SHE CARED TO BRING ALONG, TO ANYPLACE SHE PLEASED. THUS ALLOWING HER TO BE "ALL SEEING."
THE ORACLE ALTAR ARRIVED HERE A FEW MONTHS AGO, PART OF THE ANCIENT GREECE EXHIBIT. MAST MUST BELIEVE IN THE LEGEND.
YEAH, BUT... IS IT TRUE?
WE'LL SOON FIND OUT, I SUPPOSE.

THIS WAS ONCE KNOWN AS THE GATEWAY TO THE GODS.
AND NOW IT'S MY GATEWAY.
WITH THIS, I CAN GO ANYWHERE ON EARTH IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
THERE'S NO VAULT I CAN'T WALK INTO. NO TREASURE I CAN'T TOUCH.
I'LL STRIDE THE EARTH LIKE A GOD.
SOMEBODY'S A LITTLE FULL OF HIMSELF.
I'M GOING TO REQUIRE SOME SORT OF DISTRACTION, LIZZY...
YOU MEAN, LIKE IMPROV?
IF YOU THINK THAT'LL GET THEIR ATTENTION... GIVE IT A GO.
FORT KNOX... HERE WE COME.
WHOOAAAAHH!

WHO DARES DEFILE MY SACRED ALTAR?!
FOOLISH MORTALS! PREPARE TO TASTE MY MIGHTY WRATH!
WHAT THE HELL...?
KLANG!
CROFT!
BWONG!
SHOOT HER!
BOOM!
BOOAM!
BOOAAM!

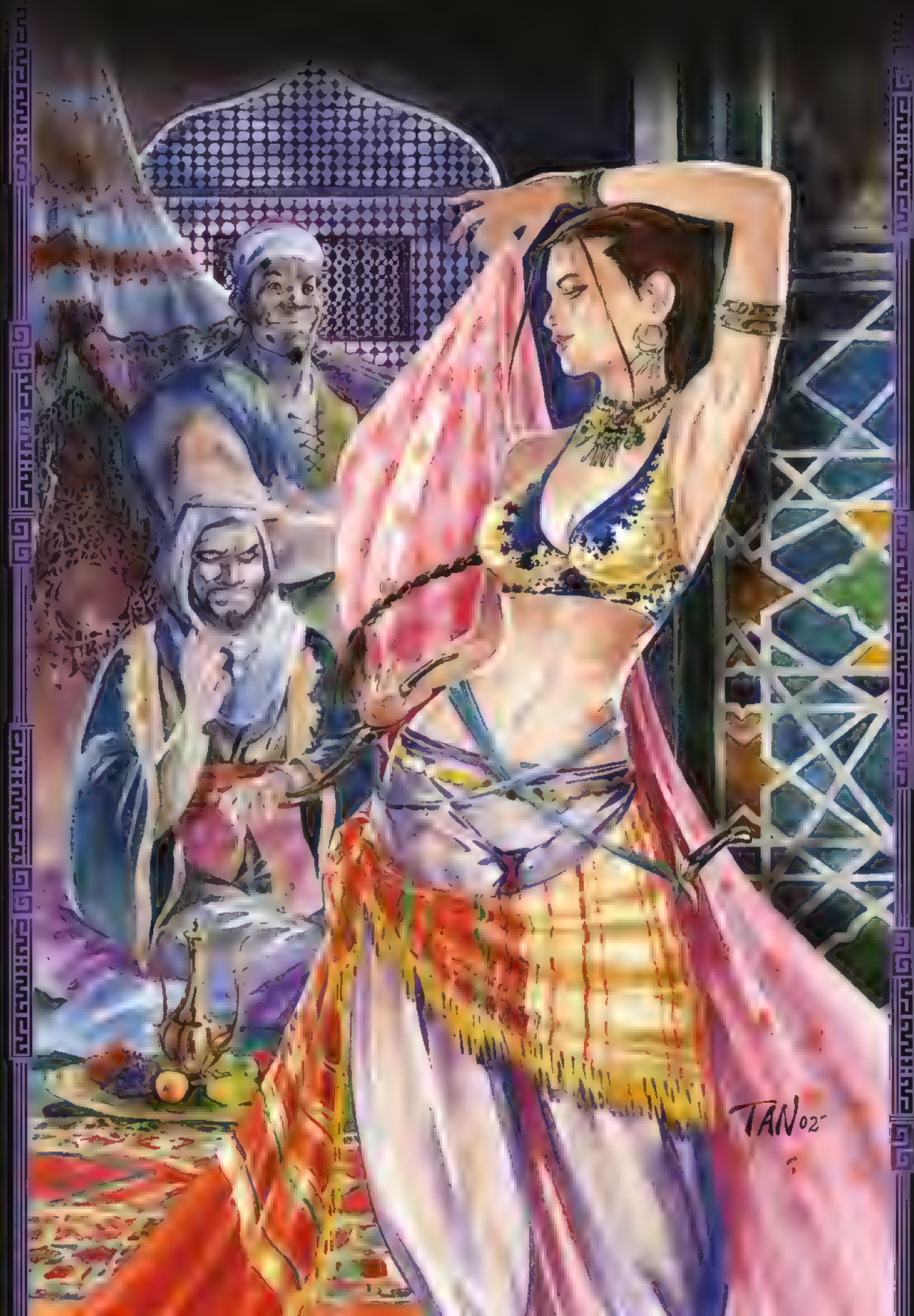

OOAAFF!
BOING
HOW'S MY WRATH TASTE, BUDDY?
I DIDN'T COME THIS FAR TO BE STOPPED NOW.
QUITE RIGHT. IN FACT, I THINK YOU SHOULD GO EVEN FURTHER...
ALL THE WAY TO OBLIVION!
WHWOOAASHAAA!
NOOOOO!

WWWRRROOOAAARRR!

WHOA! TALK ABOUT A RUSH!
THIS WAS LIKE TOTALLY AMAZING! IT WAS JUST LIKE SOMETHING IN THE MOVIES! IT WAS LIKE "DIE HARD" MEETS "THELMA & LOUISE!"
AT LEAST THERE WON'T BE A SEQUEL. MAST ISN'T COMING BACK.
WELL, YEAH, BUT... WE GOTTA KEEP IN TOUCH, GIRL.
I MEAN... YOU SAVED MY LIFE. WE WATCHED EACH OTHER'S BACKS.
WE'RE BUDS, RIGHT?
MATES FOR LIFE.
FREEZE.
RELAX FIVE-O. THE BAD GUYS HAVE LEFT THE BUILDING.
THEY GOT AWAY?
NOT EXACTLY.

MS. CROFT! THANK GOD YOU'RE UNHARMED.
BUT... WHERE IS THE DELPHI STONE?
OH. RIGHT. THE DELPHI STONE. WELL, YOU SEE...
IT'S HISTORY, DUDE.
LOOK AT ALL THE TV CAMERAS.
A PERSON COULD GET A LOT OF EXPOSURE, BEING AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.
YOU'RE LARA CROFT, AREN'T YOU? COULD YOU TELL OUR VIEWERS WHAT HAPPENED?
LIZZY WAS THERE. SHE CAN TELL YOU EVERYTHING.

I WAS RIGHT THERE, SIDE BY SIDE WITH LARA CROFT, THE WHOLE TIME.
I SAW IT ALL... AND I LIVED TO TELL THE TALE.
MY NAME'S LIZZY ZORKA. Z-O-R-K-A.
I'M REALLY AN ACTRESS...
A STAR IS BORN...
THE END.


TAN 02

SCRIPT
FIONA KAI AVERY

ART
BILLY TAN

LETTERS
ROBIN SPEHAR, DREAMER DESIGN,
DENNIS HEISLER, AND MARK ROSLAN

COVER ART
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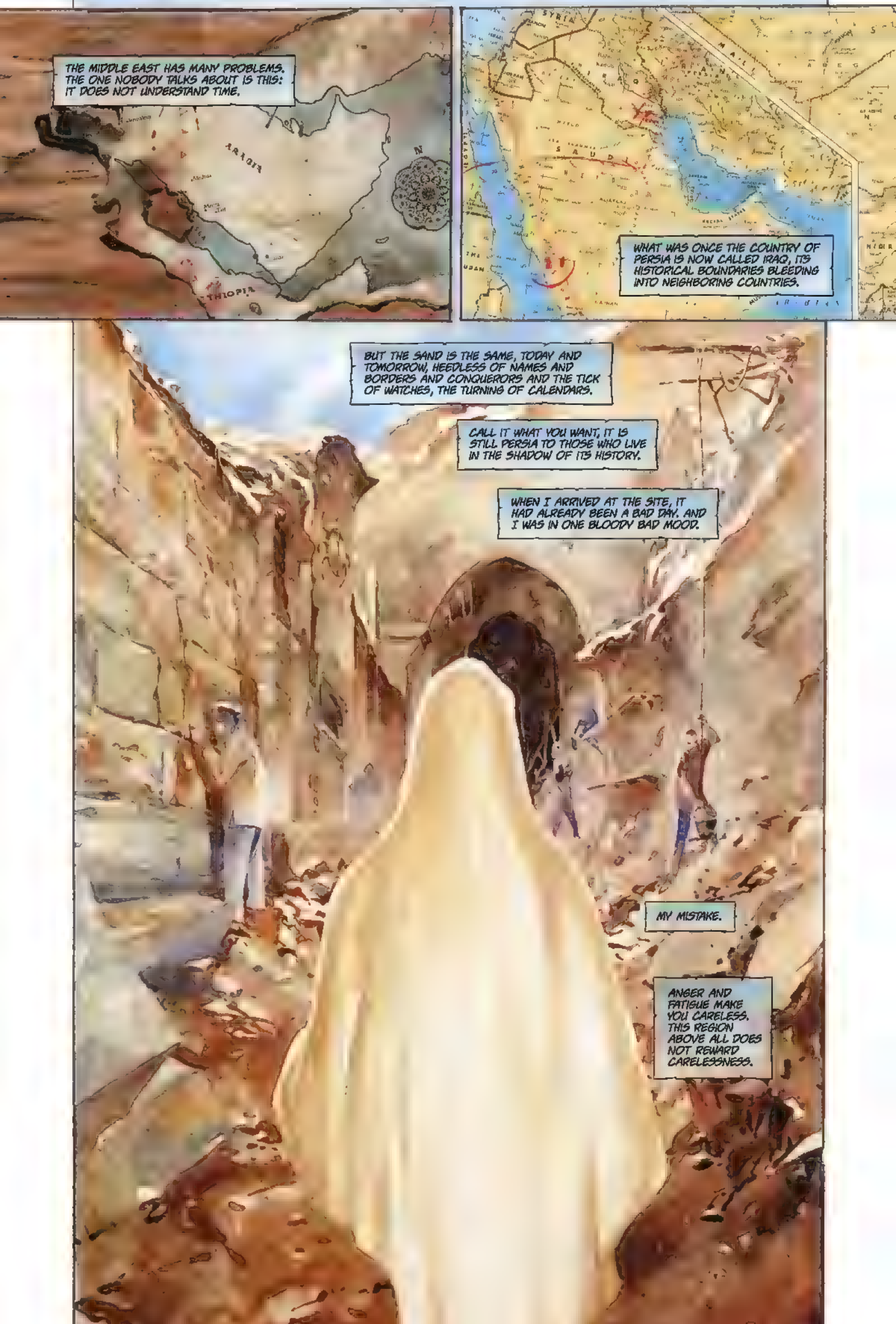

THE MIDDLE EAST HAS MANY PROBLEMS. THE ONE NOBODY TALKS ABOUT IS THIS: IT DOES NOT UNDERSTAND TIME.
ARABIA
ETHIOPIA
SYRIA
WHAT WAS ONCE THE COUNTRY OF PERSIA IS NOW CALLED IRAQ, ITS HISTORICAL BOUNDARIES BLEEDING INTO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.
BUT THE SAND IS THE SAME, TODAY AND TOMORROW, HEEDLESS OF NAMES AND BORDERS AND CONQUERORS AND THE TICK OF WATCHES, THE TURNING OF CALENDARS.
CALL IT WHAT YOU WANT, IT IS STILL PERSIA TO THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE SHADOW OF ITS HISTORY.
WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE SITE, IT HAD ALREADY BEEN A BAD DAY. AND I WAS IN ONE BLOODY BAD MOOD.
MY MISTAKE.
ANGER AND FATIGUE MAKE YOU CARELESS. THIS REGION ABOVE ALL DOES NOT REWARD CARELESSNESS.

GOING TO A DIG IN IRAQ ALREADY PRESENTS A CERTAIN KIND OF DIFFICULTY.

PROBLEMS AT CUSTOMS WITH BOMB THREATS, KIDNAPPINGS, GENDER ISSUES...

BUT I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT YOU CAN NEVER TRY AND GUESS WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU ONCE YOU GET TO WHERE YOU'RE GOING.

USUALLY THE DAMNEDEST THINGS END UP OCCURING.

BOOAM!

BOAM!

THUD!

AFTER WHAT HAPPENED, THE LAST THING I WOULD EXPECT TO THINK ON AWAKENING IS SOMETHING SMELLS GOOD.
BUT SOMETHING SMELLS GOOD.
ARE YOU HUNGRY?
FAMISHED.
GOOD. HUNGER WILL HELP THIS GO DOWN.
SO, WHO ARE YOU?
I AM SCHEHEREZADE. FOR UNTOLD YEARS, I HAVE BEEN DREAMING OF THE DAY WHEN SOMEONE WOULD TAKE MY PLACE AND FREE ME FROM MY CURSE.
DO YOU LIKE YOUR BEETLE RARE OR WELL DONE?
BURNT INTO UNRECOGNIZEABILITY.
WAIT A MINUTE... ARE YOU SAYING YOU'RE *THE* SCHEHEREZADE OF LEGEND? THE WOMAN WHO KEPT HERSELF ALIVE BY TELLING ONE THOUSAND AND ONE TALES TO KING SCHRIYAR?
WELL, YES. AND NO. IT WAS NOT KING SCHRIYAR WHO IMPRISONED ME, BUT A DEMON WHO HAS KEPT ME TRAPPED HERE FOR CENTURIES, TELLING HIM STORIES.
ALTHOUGH I SUPPOSE IT IS EASY TO MISTAKE HIS NAME FOR THE DEMON'S NAME, SHAHRYAR. I MUST TELL HIM A STORY EVERY NIGHT OR I WILL BE KILLED.

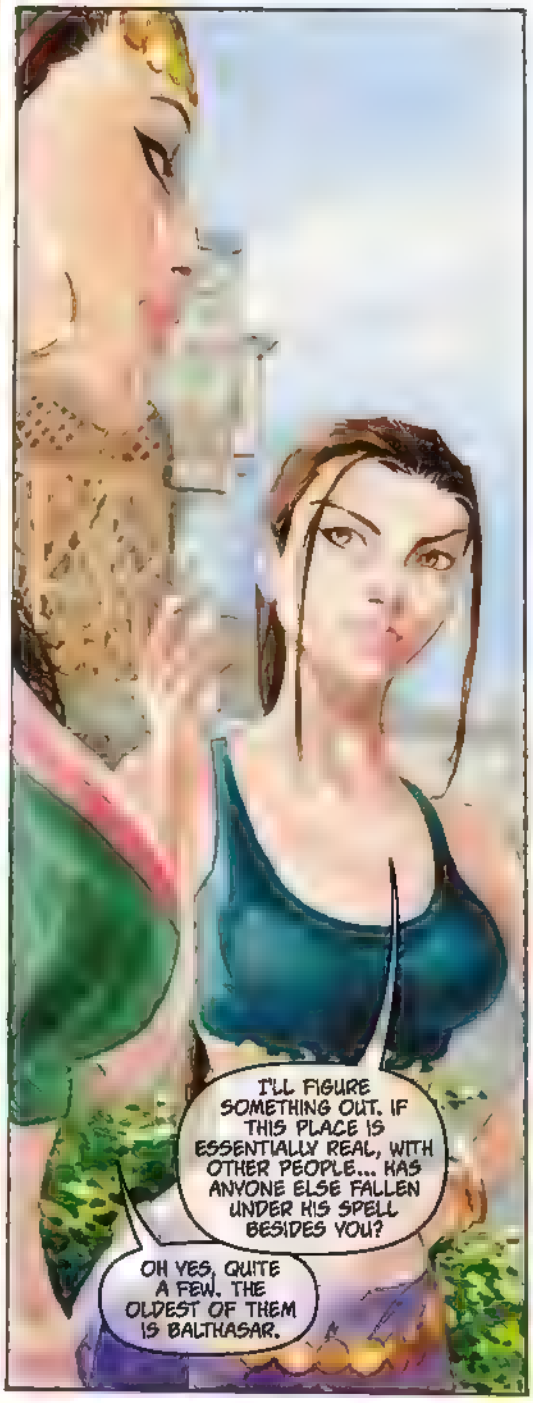
WHERE IS THIS DEMON?
HE SHOULD BE AWAKE ANY MINUTE NOW. TUESDAY IS SAUSAGE DAY. WEDNESDAY IS BEETLE DAY. SHAHRYAR LOVES BEETLES.
ANYTHING HE DOESN'T LOVE?
LOUD CONVERSATIONS WHEN HE'S SLEEPING.
WHO DISTURBS MY SLUMBER?
WE HAVE A GUEST, MY LORD. THE GREAT BEETLES HAVE BROUGHT IN... WELL, TO TELL THE TRUTH, I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE WHO SHE IS.
ARE YOU A PRINCESS?
WARRIOR?
PRIESTESS?
LARA CROFT.
I AM AN ARCHAEOLOGIST, SOMEONE WHO STUDIES THE PAST.
THE DISTANT PAST, OR--
WELL, IF YOU ARE TRULY SCHEHEREZADE, THEN OVER ONE THOUSAND YEARS HAVE PASSED WHILE YOU HAVE BEEN KEPT HERE TELLING STORIES.

WHY HAVEN'T YOU AGED?
SCHEHEREZADE IS DESTINED TO STAY YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL AS LONG AS SHE ENTERTAINS ME EACH EVENING WITH A STORY. TO SUCCEED IS TO LIVE FOREVER. TO FAIL IS TO DIE.
BUT NOW THAT THIS LARA CROFT IS HERE, YOU CAN SET ME FREE AND LET HER TELL YOU STORIES.
YOU HAVE SO MANY WONDERFUL STORIES TO TELL, I'M SURE, AND MY STORIES ARE GETTING RATHER TIRED. AREN'T THEY?
JUST A MINUTE. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF TAKING YOUR PLACE. IN FACT, I'D LIKE TO KNOW EXACTLY WHERE I AM AND WHY I WAS TAKEN HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
WELL, THERE HAVE BEEN TWO PONY STORIES THIS WEEK, BUT---
SSHHHHHH!!

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO TELL THE TALE, THEN YOU MUST BECOME THE TALE THAT I SHALL TELL. AND WE WILL SEE WHICH YOU PREFER.
YOU KNOW IT'S GOING TO BE A BAD DAY WHEN THE WORLD AS YOU KNOW IT STOPS MAKING SENSE AND YOU'RE FORCED TO LIVE BY SOMEONE ELSE'S RULES.
HHHHHST!
IT'S KIND OF LIKE LIVING WITH YOUR PARENTS, I SUPPOSE.

AND IT JUST GETS BETTER AND BETTER. WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
WE'VE BEEN CAST AS THE CHARACTERS IN SHAHRYAR'S CHOSEN STORY.
SO WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER WHAT'S HAPPENING?
NO, ON THE CONTRARY, THE STORY IS WOVEN ALL AROUND US, IN A STORY WORLD THAT HE HAS CREATED AND VISITED MANY TIMES, SO OFTEN THAT IT HAS BECOME REAL IN ITS WAY.
BUT WE CHOOSE OUR OWN ACTIONS BASED ON THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO US. THIS IS THE OTHER HALF OF MY CURSE. IT AMUSES THE DEMON SHAHRYAR.
I DON'T LIVE TO AMUSE OTHER PEOPLE.
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO GET USED TO IT.
NOT IF I CAN FIND A WAY TO UNDO IT.

"HOW DO YOU INTEND TO DO THAT? SHAHRYAR CASTS A MIGHTY CURSE."


I'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT. IF THIS PLACE IS ESSENTIALLY REAL, WITH OTHER PEOPLE... HAS ANYONE ELSE FALLEN UNDER HIS SPELL BESIDES YOU?
OH YES, QUITE A FEW. THE OLDEST OF THEM IS BALTHASAR.

IS HE HERE AS WELL?
YES.
GOOD. TAKE ME TO H.M.
AS YOU WISH, HIS SHOP IS HERE IN THE MERCHANT DISTRICT.

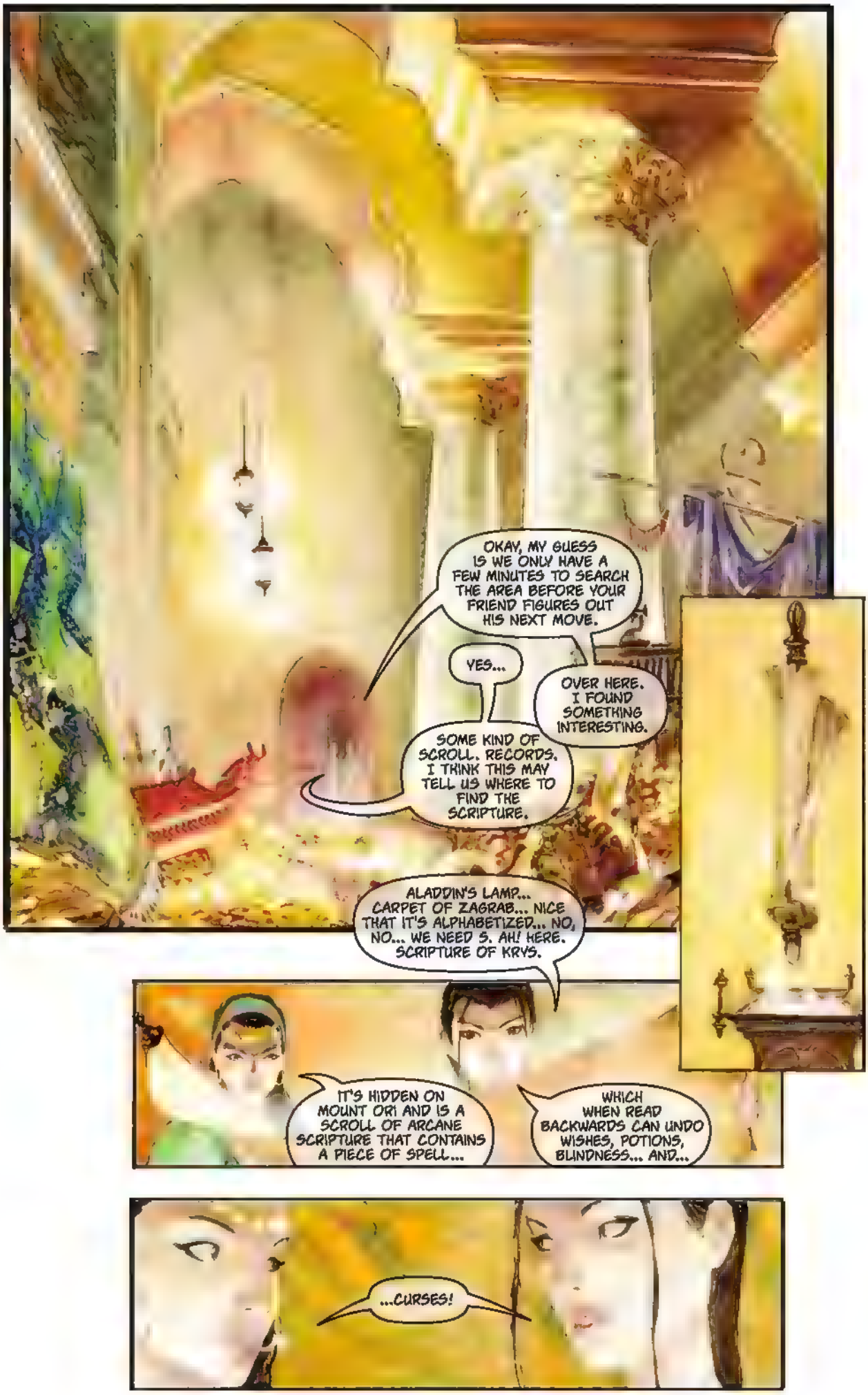
GOOD EVENING, SIR. I AM LARA CROFT AND THIS IS...
SCHEHEREZADE. YES, WE KNOW EACH OTHER. ON ANOTHER TALE, I SEE. HOPE YOU LIVE THROUGH THIS ONE TOO.
SIR---
YOU CAN CALL ME BALTHASAR. THERE WAS ANOTHER DREAMER WHO CAME THROUGH HERE A FEW YEARS AGO. HIS NAME WAS EDDIE. I THOUGHT IT WAS A FINE NAME AND CONSIDERED USING IT, JUST FOR THE VARIETY, BECAUSE WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE HERE---
I---
BUT I WAS BORN BALTHASAR, SO CALL ME---
BALTHASAR!
YES?
IF THIS IS A REAL PLACE WITH REAL RULES, IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL HERE THAT COULD HELP US ESCAPE?
AH! YES! I AM TOO OLD TO GO AFTER IT, BUT I KNOW WHAT YOU SEEK!
BALTHASAR, NO!---
QUIET YOU. YOU'VE NEVER ASKED FOR IT AND THIS ONE HAS THE COURAGE TO DO SO. WHAT YOU SEEK IS...
...ULG...
...THE SCRIPTURE OF KRYS...

LARA, WE MUST RUN!
GOOD CALL, I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT ONE. WHO ARE THOSE MEN?
THE OVERLORD WHO RUNS THIS PLACE. HIS ARMY HAS BEEN PITTED AGAINST US.
WHY?
I DON'T KNOW.
WHICH WAY?
FOLLOW ME!

GRAAK!
WE SHOULD BE SAFE FOR NOW.
BUT DON'T YOU SEE? THERE'S NO REAL REASON FOR THEM TO BE AFTER US. THIS IS POINTLESS.
IT'S JUST CONFLICT THROWN IN FOR THE SAKE OF A LITTLE ACTION BECAUSE YOUR DEMON SHAHRYAR HAS DECIDED IT WOULD MAKE GOOD ENTERTAINMENT TO SEND AN ENTIRE ARMY AFTER US.
HE'S NOT MUCH OF A STORYTELLER, IS HE?
SHHH... THE STORY IS SUPPOSED TO BE INTERESTING AND YOU'RE NOT PLAYING ALONG.
I DON'T PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS. AT LEAST THIS EXPLAINS WHY THEY NEED HUMAN STORYTELLERS... IF THEY HAD ANY IMAGINATION THEY WOULDN'T BE DEMONS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
NOW, WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION ON THIS SCRIPTURE OF KRYS?
YOU SHOULDN'T GO AFTER THAT. IT'S DANGEROUS. IF YOU THINK SHAHRYAR'S WRATH IS BAD NOW, YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'D INCUR IF YOU--
LISTEN, I DON'T INTEND TO SIT AROUND MY NOW ELONGATED AND UNNATURAL LIFE PLAYING THE HEROINE IN EVERY BAD STORY THIS GUY WANTS TO HEAR.
NOW, WHERE DO I FIND THIS SCRIPTURE?

THERE IS A PALACE ON THE EASTERN FOOTHILLS OF THE GREAT MYARKAS MOUNTAIN RANGE. IT'S A FORTRESS. IMPENETRABLE. DEEP IN THE DUNGEONS OF THIS FORTRESS IS THE TREASURE ROOM.
AND THE SCRIPTURE IS THERE?
NO, THE SCRIPTURE HAS NEVER BEEN IN THE POSSESSION OF ANY BEING IN HISTORY. IF ANY ONE WERE TO GET THEIR HANDS ON IT, THEY COULD CHANGE EVERYTHING WITH JUST ONE SINGLE WISH.
SOUNDS LIKE JUST WHAT I NEED. TAKE ME TO THE PALACE AT MYARKAS.
AS YOU WISH.

BUT YOU WILL SOON SEE IT'S A FOOL'S ERRAND.
YOU WANT A FOOL'S ERRAND, TRY GETTING CHANGE FOR A TWENTY POUND NOTE IN DOWNTOWN LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT.
THAK!
THUP!
WHAT?
NEVER MIND. THAT IT?
YES.


OKAY, MY GUESS IS WE ONLY HAVE A FEW MINUTES TO SEARCH THE AREA BEFORE YOUR FRIEND FIGURES OUT HIS NEXT MOVE.
YES...
OVER HERE. I FOUND SOMETHING INTERESTING.
SOME KIND OF SCROLL. RECORDS. I THINK THIS MAY TELL US WHERE TO FIND THE SCRIPTURE.
ALADDIN'S LAMP... CARPET OF ZAGRAB... NICE THAT IT'S ALPHABETIZED... NO, NO... WE NEED S. AH! HERE. SCRIPTURE OF KRYS.
IT'S HIDDEN ON MOUNT ORI AND IS A SCROLL OF ARCANE SCRIPTURE THAT CONTAINS A PIECE OF SPELL...
WHICH WHEN READ BACKWARDS CAN UNDO WISHES, POTIONS, BLINDNESS... AND...
...CURSES!

A FEW SECRET TUNNELS, RAPPELLING ROPES AND NARROW ALLEYS LATER...
WHERE IS THIS MOUNT ORI?
THE MOUNTAIN IS THE TALLEST IN THE RANGE OF NORTHERN MOUNTAINS MILES OUTSIDE THE CITY. IT CAN ONLY BE ACCESSED BY FLYING CARPET. THERE ARE NO PATHS FOR MAN OR BEAST THAT GO TO THE SUMMIT OF THE MOUNTAIN.
OKAY, I'LL BITE. WHERE CAN WE GET OUR HANDS ON A FLYING CARPET THEN?
THEY ARE NOT EASILY FOUND BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ACCIDENTS. FLYING IS NOT HARD, BUT TAKING FAST TURNS IN A PIECE OF SOFT RUG IN A FAST WIND, THAT IS HARD.
NOW ONLY THE OVERLORD'S ARMY MAY USE THEM. BUT I DO KNOW SOMEONE WHO DEALS IN ILLEGAL GOODS. ALI, THE LEADER OF A LOCAL GANG OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAPPED HERE AND FOUND HARD WAYS IN HARDER LIVES.
THEY CONTROL THE INNER CITY. HE WOULD KNOW WHERE SUCH A THING WOULD BE.

AS I FEARED... THE MINIONS OF THE OVERLORD ARE EVERYWHERE! WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
WE HAVE TO SPEAK WITH ALI. I DON'T CARE HOW MANY SOLDIERS ARE IN THE WAY. HOW CAN I GET A MESSAGE TO HIM SO THAT HE WON'T BECOME A TARGET?
AFTER BALTHASAR DIED GIVING ME INFORMATION, I REFUSE TO PUT ANYONE ELSE IN DANGER.
THERE IS ONE WAY OF COMMUNICATION THAT ALL GANG LORDS KNOW. BUT I'M NOT SURE YOU'RE WILLING TO MAKE THAT MUCH OF A SACRIFICE TO DO IT.
WHAT IS IT?

CLINK!
CLINK!
CLINK!
CLINK!
CLINK!
CLINK!
CLINK!
CLINK!
CLINK!
N-E-E-D F-L-Y-I-N-G
C-A-R-P-E-T
B-U-T S-E-E
O-V-E-R-L-O-R-D
G-U-A-R-D-S
H-A-V-E M-A-D-E
T-H-E-M-S-E-L-V-E-S
A-T H-O-M-

I BRING WORD FROM LORD ALI!
YES, BUT DO YOU HAVE A FLYING CARPET?
NO.
MARVELOUS...
BUT MY MASTER SAYS A CARPET THAT CAN HANDLE A SOJOURN UP MOUNT ORI IS TO BE FOUND IN THE PITS OF SARCAPHA.
THAT DOESN'T SOUND TOO BAD.
IT'S FULL OF SNAKES!
SNAKES SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM FOR THE LIKES OF YOU.
TRUE.
IT'S THE SNAKE GODDESS THAT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO DEFEAT.
DOES THIS PERSON HAVE THE FLYING CARPET I NEED?
YES, BUT NO ONE'S EVER DEFEATED HER BEFORE.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE—
FFFFT!
LORD ALI!
WHAT IS IT?
WE FOUND HIM KILLED IN AN ALLEY JUST NORTH OF HERE.
DAMN THEM. DAMN SHAHRYAR THE DEMON TOO! I HAVE BEEN IN THIS PATHETIC CURSE FOR A CENTURY AND THIS IS WHERE I DRAW THE LINE. HE WAS JUST A BOY!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
THERE'S A NEW PLAYER. SCHEHEREZADE NEVER DID ANYTHING TO ESCAPE, BUT THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE REASON THIS NEW WOMAN IS GOING AFTER THE CARPET OF THE SNAKE GODDESS.
SHE'S AFTER THE SCRIPTURE OF KRYS?
AND NEEDS TO CLIMB MOUNT ORI. SHE'S GOING TO NEED ALL THE HELP SHE CAN GET. I NEED TO FIND HER. LET'S HURRY!

A CAVE, IT'S ALWAYS A DARK CAVE.
FULL OF SNAKES, A GODDESS, AND A FLYING CARPET.
AND APPARENTLY BONES.
AT LEAST THE SNAKE PART SOUNDS EASY.
THEN AGAIN...
SSSSSSSSSSS!

TWAM!
SCHEREHAZEDE HANGS BACK, BUT I DON'T TAKE OFFENSE. WOMEN OF HER TIME WERE NOT KNOWN FOR FIGHTING.
EXCEPT THE WOMAN WITH THE SLITTED EYES, SCALES AND FORKED TONGUE.
SHE'S STRONG.
SHE'S FAST.
BUT I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE.

LARA! LOOK OUT!
OOF!
HER TEETH OPEN A VEIN. I LET IT BLEED.
SHE EXPECTS ME TO BE AFRAID.
I DISAPPOINT HER.
AND I NOTICE SHE HASN'T SPOKEN, AND STAYS CLEAR OF THE STATUE OF THE GREAT SNAKE.
I TAKE A CHANCE THAT SHE'S AS TRAPPED HERE AS WE ARE, FORCED TO FIGHT.

OTHERWISE SHE'D BE GLOATING AND TEASING LIKE THE TWELVE OTHER SNAKE GODDESSES I'VE RUN ACROSS OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS.
AND ONE SNAKE GOD.
BUT THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO DWELL ON PAST RELATIONSHIPS. I LEAP OVER HER AND ATTACK THE STATUE. IF I'M RIGHT, WE WIN. IF I'M WRONG—
WELL, REALLY, WHAT ARE THE ODDS OF THAT?

SHE TRANFORMS BACK TO HUMAN FORM RIGHT IN FRONT OF US. IT ALWAYS HURTS MY EYES WHEN THIS HAPPENS.
THANK YOU! FOR YEARS, I HAVE WAITED FOR SOMEONE TO FREE ME AND----
YEAH, WELL, THERE SEEMS TO BE A LOT OF THAT GOING AROUND. LISTEN, DO YOU MIND IF WE--
NO, PLEASE TAKE IT, IT IS YOURS WITH MY GRATITUDE.

I SAW WHAT YOU DID. WELL DONE!
THANKS. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
THE OVERLORD'S MEN ARE COMING FOR YOU. THEY KILLED MY MESSENGER AND LEARNED WHERE YOU WERE GOING, AND WHAT YOU WERE GOING AFTER: THE SCRIPTURE OF KRYS.
WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING ME THEN? WHAT'S YOUR VESTED INTEREST?
I WANT OUT OF THIS WORLD WITH YOU.
THIS PLACE IS JUST BUSTING OUT ALL OVER, ISN'T IT? MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE WATER.
OR YOU.
YOU SAYING I'M BUSTING OUT ALL OVER?
NO.
TOO BAD.

LOOKS LIKE MY BAD DAY JUST GOT WORSE.
THERE ARE MANY, ON FEW CARPETS. WE CAN OUTRUN THEM.
ARE YOU SURE?
NO. NEVER TRIED IT BEFORE.
AND THE HITS JUST KEEP ON COMING. OKAY, KANG ON!

COME ON, CARPET, GO! GO!
WE'RE NEVER GONNA MAKE IT IN TIME!
WE'RE NEVER GONNA STAY ON THESE THINGS. WHO IN HELL AUTHORIZED RUGS AS TRANSPORTATION ANYWAY?
I BELIEVE SOMEONE WAS PAID OFF.
AH... DEREGULATION.
WHAT?
LATER.
TELL THAT TO THEM!

HANG ON, WE'RE GOING UP.
YOU'RE A MAD WOMAN!
YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST PERSON TO TELL ME THAT. BUT WITH ANY LUCK YOU'LL BE THE LAST.
TWANG!
MY LORD, THE WOMAN FROM THE OUTSIDE IS APPROACHING MOUNT ORI.
WHAT ABOUT OUR PURSUIT?
I DON'T BELIEVE THEY WILL MAKE IT IN TIME.
VERY WELL, I WILL DEAL WITH THIS MYSELF.

WHAT'S THAT?!
YOU MEAN WHO. THE OVERLORD'S COME TO FINISH THINGS HIMSELF. DAMN IT!
THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO NOW. YOU CAN'T DEFEAT A SORCERER OF HIS PROWESS. WE HAVE TO RUN!
NO!
YES, IF WE WISH TO TRY AGAIN ANOTHER DAY, WE HAVE TO LIVE TO SEE IT!

NO! I REFUSE!
NOOOOOOO!!
YOU DISAPPROVE OF THE STORY THUS FAR?
I DISAPPROVE OF EVERYTHING---- THE STORY SO FAR IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO SIT BACK AND DICTATE OUR FATES, THEN YOU SHOULD SHOW ENOUGH COURAGE TO BE THERE IN THE FINAL MOMENTS.
SUCH TRIFLES DO NOT INTEREST ME.
IF YOU COME DOWN IN PERSON, I PROMISE I WILL MAKE THE END MORE THRILLING THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.
COME ON... EVERYONE NEEDS A COLLABORATOR ONCE IN A WHILE.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
LISTEN, WHATEVER HE DOES TO ME, THIS IS YOUR ONE CHANCE. TAKE THE SCRIPTURE OF KRYS AND GET EVERYONE OUT OF HERE.
BUT--!
GO ON--- DO IT! NOW!

IS THIS THE BEST YOU CAN DO?
TWAK!
WITH ALL MY CLOTHES ON, SURE.
THUNK!
YOU ARE TRYING TO TEMPT ME.
THUMP!
YOU THRUST MAGNIFICENTLY.
I'LL BET YOU TELL THAT TO ALL THE GIRL DEMONS... AND THE GUY DEMONS...

TWUNP!
SWUSH!
THEN HE HITS ME IN WAYS I NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE, AND I SEE HE WAS PLAYING WITH ME.
TWAP!
THIS IS NO LONGER A GAME, NO LONGER FUNNY.
I MIGHT DIE HERE.
BUT I NEVER SAID I WANTED TO LIVE FOREVER.
I'VE SEEN IMMORTALITY.
IT'S OVER-RATED.

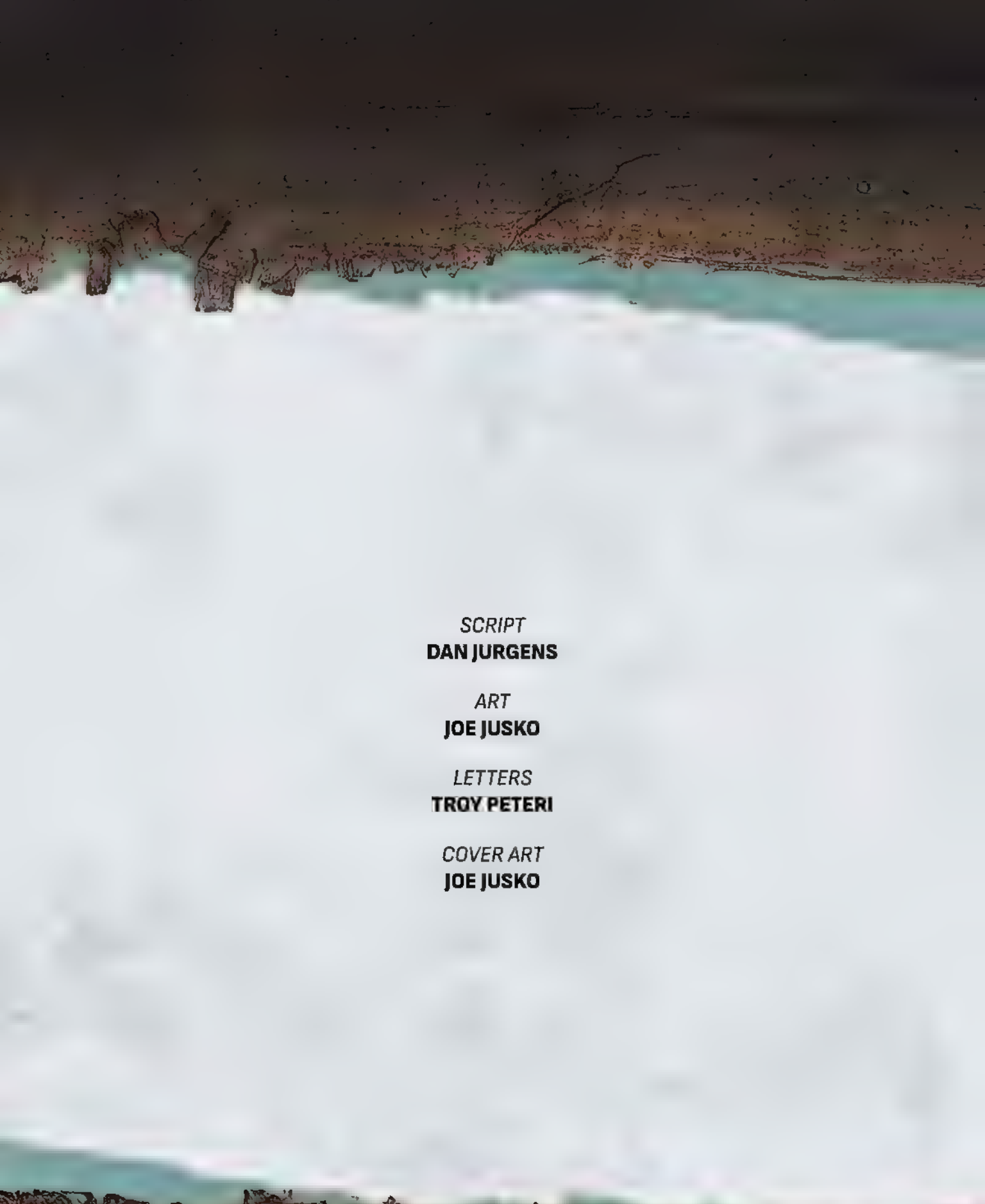
I THINK YOU TURN IT THIS WAY--
OW!
YOU DID NOT TURN IT FAR ENOUGH--
I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING--
HELP!
MAYBE WE SHOULD ASK SOMEONE FOR INFORMATION--
AHA! THERE YOU SEE! ALL I HAD TO DO WAS--
UH!
WILL YOU SHUT UP AND THROW ME THE SCROLL ALREADY?!
CATCH!

BEFORE HE CAN REACT, I READ THE SCROLL BACKWARDS. IT'S HARD BECAUSE I HAVE TO REVERSE THE SYLLABLES AND PRONUNCIATION.
ONE MISTAKE AND IT WON'T WORK. BUT I DON'T MAKE MISTAKES. EXCEPT MISTAKES OF THE HEART. BUT NO ONE'S PERFECT.
AAAGGGHHHHH!

THE VOID OPENS, CONSUMES THE DEMON, THE WORLD, AND US, DRAWING US OUT OF THE LAMP. IT FEELS LIKE BEING TURNED INSIDE OUT AND BACK AGAIN.
BUT IT'S BETTER THAN THE BEETLES.
BUT NOTHING BEATS THE STONES.
KKKKKKKK!

SSHHH...
...HHHH!
WE'RE FREE! THANK YOU!
DON'T BOTHER. I REALIZED THAT YOU MUST HAVE SENT THOSE BEETLES AFTER ME, TO GET ME. YOU COULD HAVE TOLD ME THE TRUTH.
I WAS AFRAID YOU WOULD NOT HELP.
I JUST REALIZED... I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO OR WHAT TO DO IN THIS WORLD. I AM A STRANGER HERE.
WE ARE ALL STRANGERS IN PERSIA. BUT PERSIA ALWAYS HOLDS A PLACE FOR STRANGERS OUT OF LEGEND, AND A VERY SPECIAL PLACE FOR TELLERS OF STORIES. I THINK YOU'LL BOTH WORK SOMETHING OUT.
BECAUSE THIS IS PERSIA, AND PERSIA DOES NOT UNDERSTAND TIME.
IT UNDERSTANDS ONLY THE HEART.
THE END.

THE GREATEST TREASURE OF ALL



SCRIPT
DAN JURGENS

ART
JOE JUSKO

LETTERS
TROY PETERI

COVER ART
JOE JUSKO

THE MAN'S NAME IS CHASE CARVER.
A LIFETIME OR TWO AGO, HE AND I WERE...INVOLVED.
NOW WE'RE PARTNERS IN BUSINESS.
DANGEROUS BUSINESS.
WE FIND THINGS.
IMPOSSIBLE-TO-LOCATE THINGS.
THINGS THAT ARE ONLY RUMORED TO EXIST--
--WITH VALUE BEYOND DESCRIPTION.
WOW.

TOMB RAIDER
THE GREATEST TREASURE OF ALL

LARA!

YOU... YOU'RE ALIVE!

EASY, CHASE. A HEART ATTACK WILL DO THE JOB THE BULLETS DIDN'T.

DUSKO Y2K

BUT THAT PLANE CRASH--I THOUGHT YOU WERE A GONER!
YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER.
GIRL, I HAVE NEVER BEEN HAPPIER TO SEE YOUR CURVACEOUS BEHIND.
C'MERE.
ROWLLL
DOWN, BOY!
WHO'S YOUR FURRY FRIEND?
MY GUARDIAN ANGEL.
SINCE WHEN DO YOU NEED GUARDIN' FROM ME?
SINCE THE SECOND WE MET.
WAIT. YOU HEAR THAT?

COMPANY.
FAT LOTTA GOOD YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL IS DOING YOU NOW!
NO WAY WE CAN BEAT THEIR FIRE POWER. WE'RE DONE FOR, RED!
NOT YET.
HEAD UP RIVER. DRAW THEIR FIRE.

EX-CUSE ME?
I WON'T LAST TWO SECONDS!
GO.
ROWWW!
OKAY, OKAY!
OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN--
--HALLOWED BE THY NAME.
<THERE!>
THY KINGDOM COME--
OH, SH--!
B-DAM
B-DAM
B-DAM
RELAX, CHASE.
THIS PARTY IS OVER.

HUK!

NOW THAT THE BAND'S STOPPED P..AY NG--
--IT'S TIME TO TURN OUT THE LIGHTS.
BOOM

BWhoooom

I KNEW I'D BE WALKING INTO A HORNET'S NEST, BUT WHEN THIS FIRST STARTED--
--I HAD NO IDEA HOW BAD IT WOULD BE.
Forty-one hours ago.
CARE TO EXPLAIN TO ME EXACTLY WHY WE'RE SNEAKING INTO A GUERILLA CONTROLLED CENTRAL AMERICAN JUNGLE, RED?
I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU, CHASE. TO FIND THE GREATEST TREASURE EVER.
WHEN I BRING IT BACK, IT WILL DWARF ANYTHING ELSE WE RECOVERED.
LIKE WHAT? THE BIGGEST DIAMOND EVER?
OR MAYBE A WHOLE GOLD MINE?
WAIT! I KNOW! IT'S THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH!
THE KEY TO ETERNAL LIFE!
BETTER.

DON'T DO THIS TO ME, RED! YOU CAN'T DRAG ME ALL THE WAY HERE WITHOUT PUTTING OUT!
DON'T YOU MEAN, "PUTTING UP"?
WHEN WE FIND IT, YOU'LL KNOW. BUT I GUARANTEE IT'S THE MOST VALUABLE THING EVER.
AT LAST, I'LL BE RICH! I'LL--
WHAT THE BLOODY HELL WAS THAT?
REBELS.
THE JOB JUST GOT TOUGHER.

DAMN.
THE PLANE'S HAD IT, CHASE. WE'LL NEVER GET IT UP AGAIN.
THERE ISN'T A MAN IN EXISTENCE THAT WANTS TO HEAR *THAT*, RED! WHAT NOW?
PRAY.

UHF!
GHYAAH!
KAH!
I'M ALIVE?
CAN'T HARDLY BELIEVE IT--
--BUT I'M ALIVE.
RED?
LARA.

The present.
CARE TO TELL ME HOW YOU SURVIVED THE PLANE CRASH?
THICK BRUSH, SAME AS YOU.
WHERE'D YOU PICK UP CLARENCE?
ONCE I HIT THE GROUND I WANTED TO FIND YOU BUT THE GUERRILLAS WERE RIGHT BETWEEN US.
I HEADED EAST, HOPING WE COULD HOOK UP EVENTUALLY.
Eighteen hours ago.
SOON AS THIS IS COOKED I BETTER DOUSE THE FIRE.
NO SENSE ADVERTISING MY PRESENCE.

T-SHIRT
WHO--?
RROWWLLL
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
A LION--IN CENTRAL AMERICA?
HUNGRY, FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS.
HERE Y'GO, KITTY.

ROWL
GONNA TAKE A LOT MORE THAN THIS PEA-SHOOTER TO PUT YOU DOWN.
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I WON'T TRY.
ROWL
The present.
I DON'T KNOW HOW HE ENDED UP HERE, BUT AS TAME AS HE IS--
--HE'S OBVIOUSLY BEEN RAISED BY MAN.
EVER SINCE I FED HIM HE'S BEEN AT MY SIDE.
SO LONG AS HE UNDERSTANDS I'M NOT ON HIS MENU.
WHERE TO FROM HERE?

THERE'S A LONG LOST MAYAN TEMPLE NOT FAR FROM HERE.
AS FAR AS I KNOW, IT'S NEVER BEEN SEEN BY WESTERN EYES.
WHICH MEANS IT WAS NEVER DUG!
NOT BY ARCHEOLOGISTS. BUT IF THE VILLAGERS WHO TOLD ME OF IT KNOW WHERE IT IS--
--TOMB RAIDERS PROBABLY TRIED OVER THE YEARS.
WHY BOTHER TO CHECK IT OUT?
BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T GET WHAT WE'RE AFTER. COUNT ON IT.
WHAT ARE WE AFTER? YOU'RE MAKIN' ME NUTS!
I TOLD YOU. YOU'LL FIND OUT WHEN WE SEE IT.
JUST KEEP TELLING YOURSELF IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT.
CONSIDER'N WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH, IT BETTER BE.

Fifty-one hours ago.
I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR AGREEING TO THIS, MS. CROFT.
MY PLEASURE, MRS. CONSTANTINE. I GUESS...I NEVER CONSIDERED SUCH A JOB BEFORE.
ACCOMPLISH THIS AND YOU'LL REWARD ME WITH THE GREATEST TREASURE CONCEIVABLE.
The present.
DON'T WORRY, CHASE. IT *WILL* BE.
GONNA BE MIGHTY COLD TONIGHT, RED. YOU'LL *NEED* HELP KEEPIN' WARM.
IS THIS WHAT YOU HAD IN MIND?
OH, YOU *BET.*

Morning.
CHASE, I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE SO GRUMPY THIS MORNING!
BECAUSE I DIDN'T SLEEP A WINK ONCE I WOKE UP WITH TWELVE THOUSAND BUGS CRAWLING UP MY LEGS!
YOU'VE WOKEN UP WITH A LOT WORSE, I'M SURE.
IF THAT KITTY WASN'T HERE I'D BE TEMPTED TO SPANK YOU, RED!
TAKE A LOOK.
HUSH. I THINK WE'RE GETTING CLOSE.
HOW D'YA KNOW THE VILLAGERS WEREN'T JERKING YOU AROUND?

THE ONLY ONE BEING JERKED AROUND HERE IS ME!
FORT KNOX ISN'T GUARDED THIS WELL!
STOP COMPLAINING. IT LACKS STYLE.

THIS HAD BETTER BE WORTH IT. LIKE AN ACIENT SCEPTER THAT CAN MAKE ME INVISIBLE!
OR THE REMAINS OF AN ANCIENT ASTRONAUT WE CAN SELL FOR HUGE BUCKS!
I DIDN'T SIGN ON TO GO TO WAR, CROFT.
CONSIDER THIS A MINOR COMPLICATION.
BETTER.
WORTH SO MUCH I WON'T HAVE TO WORK AGAIN?
ENOUGH SO I CAN RETIRE AND LIVE A LIFE OF HEDONISM AND DEBAUCHERY?
LET'S GET SOME REST.
TONIGHT... WHEN THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP... WE GET AFTER IT.

YOU'RE SURE THIS'LL WORK?
WHY WOULDN'T IT?
GET SET TO GO.
'BOUT TIME WE PUT THAT FUR BALL TO USE.
WRAA-AARRR!
MADRE DIOS!

THIS IS GONNA BE BLOODY.
ARE YOU-- KIDDING ME?
WILDFIRE! YOU ARE HOME!
WILDFIRE, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
YOUR BELOVED MASCOT IS RETURNED, EL TIGRE!
HE'S--
--HIS PET?!
THIS MIGHT REQUIRE A CHANGE IN PLANS.

IT TOOK A COUPLE OF HOURS--
--BUT THEY FINALLY DRANK THEMSELVES TO SLEEP.
BEFORE DOING SO, WE WATCHED THEIR LEADER BEAT THE LION FOR RUNNING OFF.
I HALF EXPECTED THE BEAST TO TURN ON HIM, BUT NO SUCH LUCK.
ONE DAY, THAT MIGHT CHANGE.
RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE OTHER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT.

YOU CAN READ THOSE SYMBOLS?
OF COURSE.
WHICH LEADS US HERE.
MR. CARVER, OUR TREASURE.
YOU... CAN'T BE SERIOUS!

WHERE'S THE REAL TREASURE?
BEHIND A SECRET PANEL?
UNDER A TRAP DOOR?
WHERE?!
SARAH CONSTANTINE?
OH, THANK GOODNESS! I'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR SOMEONE TO COME!

A GIRL?
WE CAME ALL THIS WAY AND NEARLY DIED FOR A GIRL?
HEY! WHAT KIND OF RESCUE IS THIS?
CHASE, WHAT DO YOU... WHAT SHOULD ALL OF US VALUE MOST?
WAIT! I KNOW! THERE'S A WHOLE ROOM FULL OF GOLD BEYOND THAT WALL, RIGHT?
IT'S HER, CHASE.
hours, three minutes ago.
SARAH WAS PART OF A CHURCH MISSION, MS. CROFT. SHE VANISHED IN AN AREA OF HEAVY REBEL ACTIVITY.
I SYMPATHIZE, BUT I'M NOT SURE WHAT THIS HAS TO DO WITH ME.
I'VE READ ABOUT YOU, MS. CROFT. THEY SAY YOU CAN FIND ANYTHING.
I'M ASKING YOU TO FIND THE ONE THING I TREASURE MORE THAN ANY OTHER IN THE WORLD, MS. CROFT.
MY DAUGHTER.

ME? RUN A RESCUE MISSION?
THAT'S A LOT DIFFERENT THAN HUNTING DOWN ANCIENT RELICS.
SURELY, YOU'RE NOT IMPLYING MY DAUGHTER IS WORTH LESS THAN A DUSTY OLD ARTIFACT.
The present.
YOU CONNED ME, CROFT.
YOU TOTALLY SUCKERED ME INTO THIS CRAZY SCHEME.
IS HE ALWAYS LIKE THIS?
LOTS OF BARK, NO BITE.
I DON'T LIKE PEOPLE PLAYING GAMES WITH MY LIFE!
ESPECIALLY WITH FIFTY DRUNK, HOSTILE MANIACS ARMED TO THE TEETH RIGHT OUTSIDE!
IT'S NOT LIKE I ASKED FOR THIS EITHER, YOU KNOW!

QUIET DOWN BEFORE SOMEONE HEARS US.
TELL HIM. NOT ME!
WAIT! IT SUDDENLY DAWNED ON ME!
SHE'S A RICH KID, RIGHT? A PRINCESS OR DAUGHTER OF SOME MULTI-TRILLIONAIRRE!
YOU ARE SOME PIECE OF WORK, MISTER.
UH-OH.
AMERICANS?!
MORE BAIT.
I'M NEITHER, CHUNKY.
BOOM

I ASSUME YOU HAVE A CONTINGENCY PLAN BEYOND *RUN* AND *SHOOT?*
I'M WORKING ON IT.
THE DAY YOU ADMIT TO BEING FALLIBLE I'LL *KNOW* I'M DOOMED.
I'D PREFER THEM ALIVE, BUT IF YOU HAVE TO-- *KILL THEM!*
NOT ANOTHER *STEP!*
GAME, SET, *MATCH.*
NOT *YET.*

I SAID-- FREEZE!
IF I'M READING THIS RIGHT... THERE'S ANOTHER DOOR HERE!
BELOW US?
YOU'D PREFER A BULLET?

ARE YOU NUTS? EVERY TIME YOU OPEN A DOOR YOU SEND US SOMEPLACE WORSE!
FEEL FREE TO SWIM BACK AND WRESTLE WITH THE GUNS IF YOU PREFER, CHASE!
MAYBE I SHOULD SWIM BACK.
YOUR FRIEND IS TOO WEIRD TO HANDLE!
RIDE IT OUT! THIS CAN'T GO ON FOREVER!
WE'RE THROUGH! WE'RE SAFE!
NOT QUITE, BRITISHER. DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULD NOT KNOW WHERE THE CURRENT WOULD TAKE YOU?

THEY ARE TOO MUCH TROUBLE! I SAY WE SHOOT THEM!
THERE IS A BETTER WAY. A MORE APPROPRIATE... AND ENTERTAINING WAY.
WILDFIRE!
KILL!
DAMN YOU!
THIS WILL TEACH YOU TO OBEY!

THANKS FOR THE OPENING, FAT MAN!
EMPTY.
EMPTY, YES.
HELPLESS?
HARDLY!

IT'S NOT YOU I'M AFTER
IT'S YOUR PAL.
HE DESERVES THE HONOR MORE THAN ME.

PAYBACK TIME, WILDFIRE!
KILL!
GRRRRR—

--BOOAARR!--
YIIEEEEE!
SOMETIMES... JUSTICE ISN'T SO HARD TO COME BY AFTER ALL.
SO, WHO'S PAYING THE REWARD, LITTLE LADY? A ROYAL FAMILY?
A DOT-COM FOUNDER WORTH BILLIONS? AN OIL BARON?
I GUESS THERE'S ONE MORE THING YOU SHOULD KNOW, CHASE.
Fifty-one hours, six minutes ago.
LARA CROFT?
THAT'S ME. HOW CAN I HELP YOU, MS...?

ALEXANDRA CONSTANTINE.
MS. CROFT, I'M SURE YOU'RE NORMALLY VERY WELL COMPENSATED FOR YOUR ENDEAVORS.
NEVERTHELESS, I HAD TO COME TO YOU.
GO ON.
I'M A SCHOOL TEACHER, MS. CROFT.
I'M AFRAID I CAN'T POSSIBLY PAY YOU EXCEPT WITH MY GRATITUDE AND PRAYERS.
The present.
NO REWARD? NOTHING?
AFRAID SO, CHASE.
THINK OF IT THIS WAY.
THINK OF THE GREATEST TREASURE YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED.
KEEP PLAYING YOUR CARDS RIGHT AND YOU MIGHT JUST GET IT.
The End.

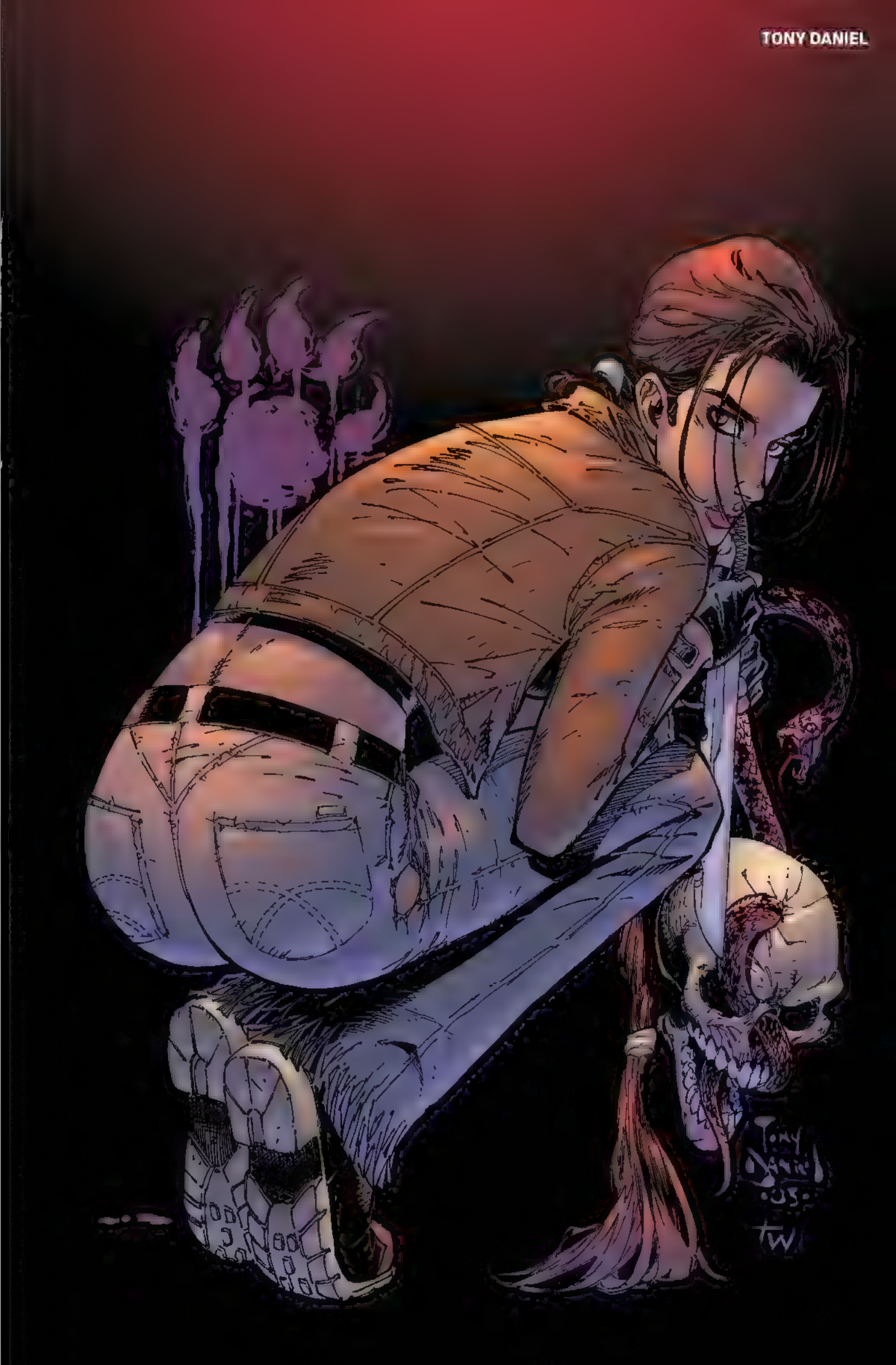
TOMB RAIDER™

COLOSSAL COLLECTION • VOLUME TWO

COVER GALLERY

TONY DANIEL
TONY
DANIEL

TONY DANIEL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MARC SILVESTRI

ADAM HUGHES
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Take a Trip to Scenic
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TYLER KIRKHAM
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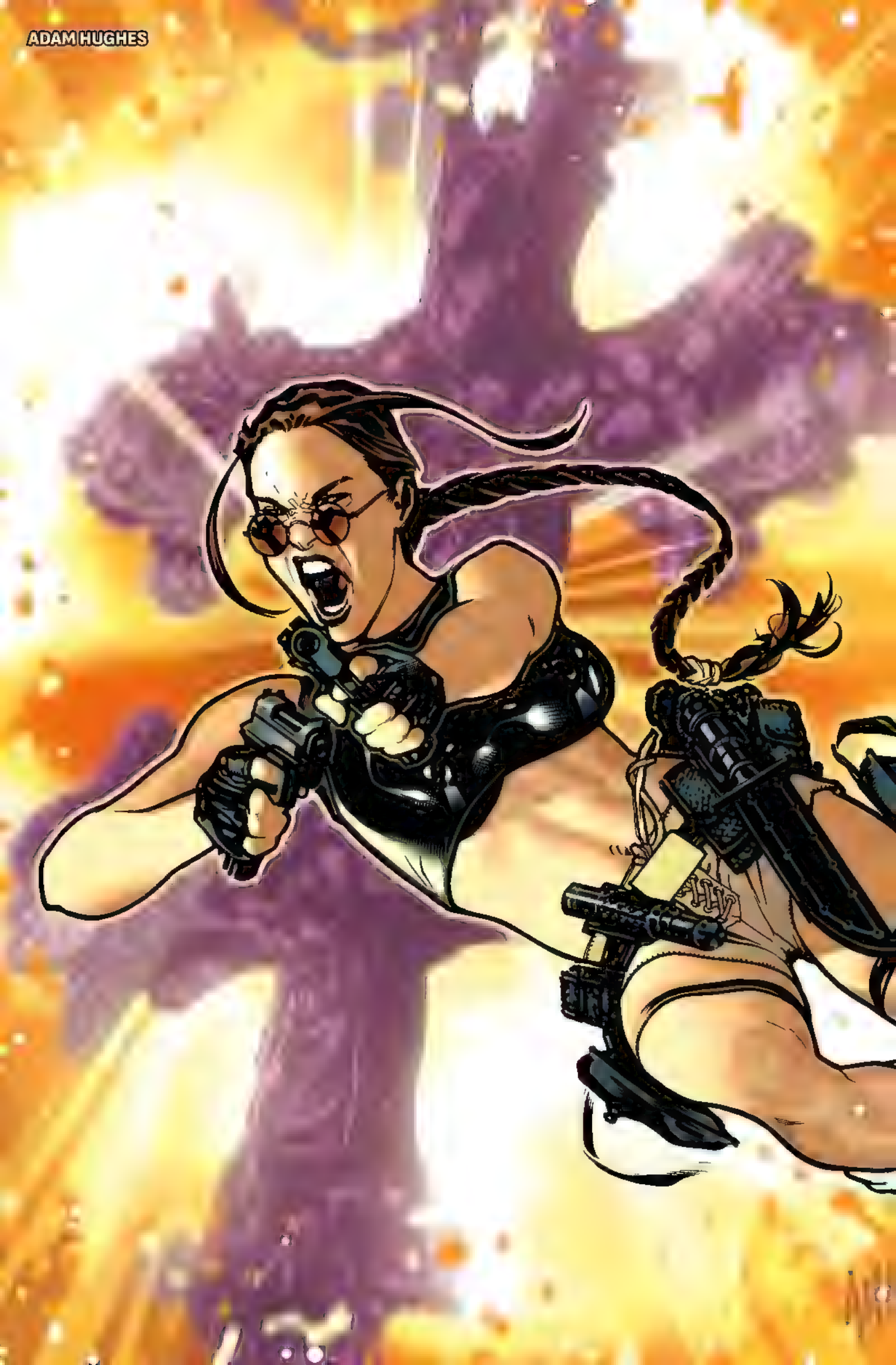
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ERIC BASALDUA
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ERIC BASALDUA

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JOE JUSKO

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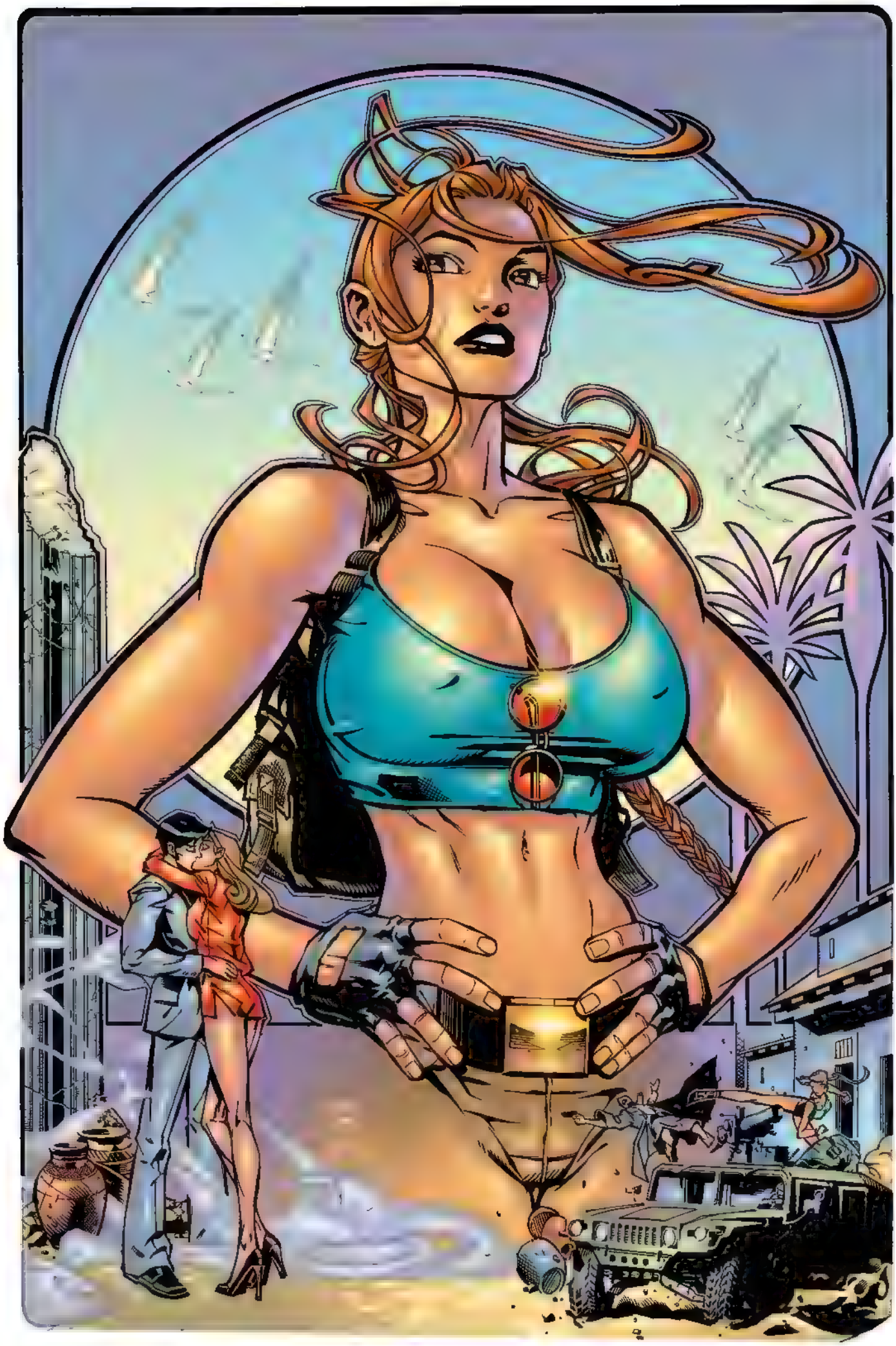

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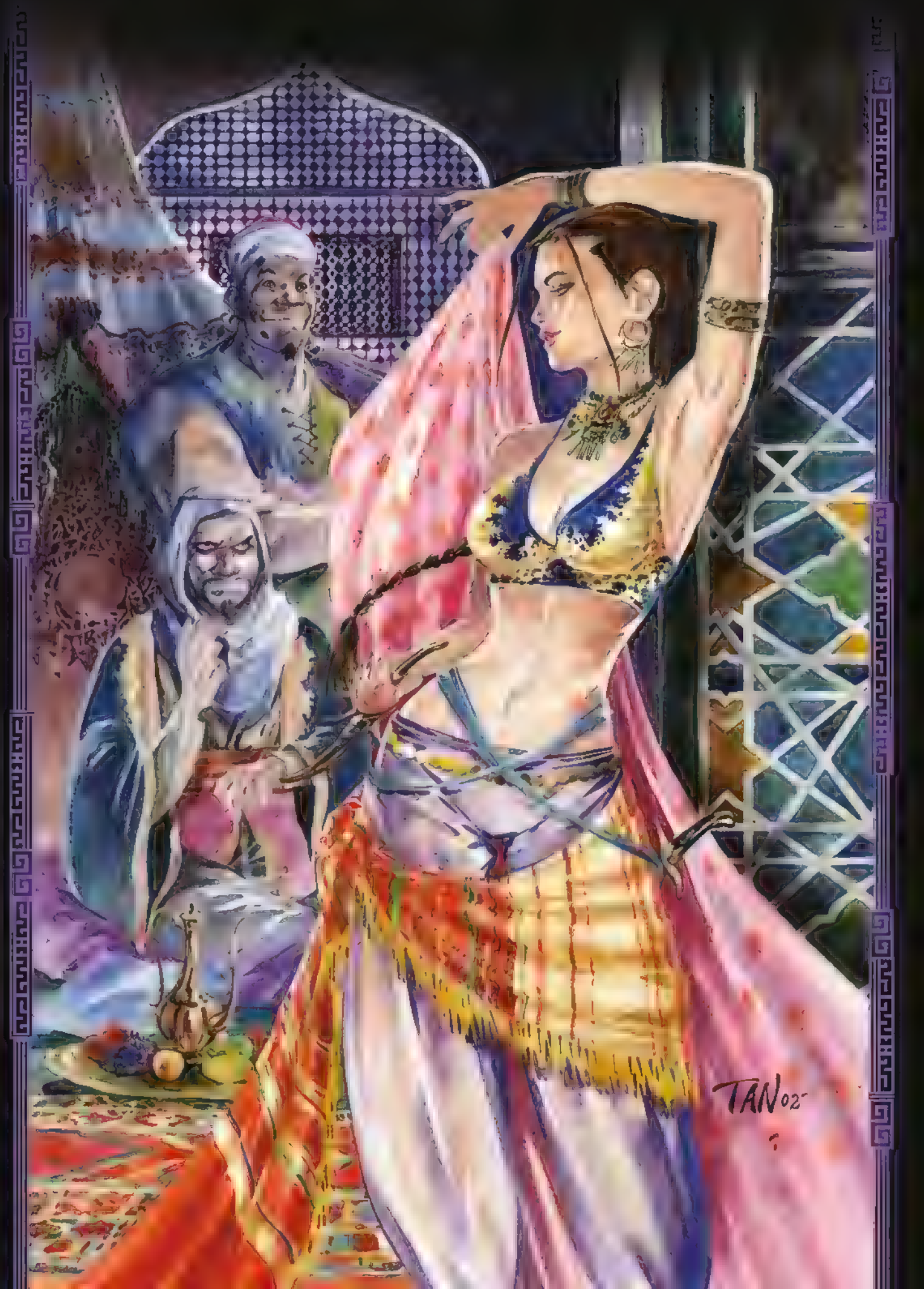
TAN 02

JOE JUSKO

LARA'S BOOK

JUNE 1998

The 1998 publication *Lara's Book: Lara Croft and the Tomb Raider Phenomenon* was penned by the novelist responsible for introducing the term "Generation X" to our turn-of-the-century lexicon. Author Douglas Coupland lent his keen eye for digital trends to the book, using prose to play up the fact that Lara Croft was very real to many of her fans. *Lara's Book* explored the rampant cultural fascination with Croft in the late nineties, focusing on the leading lady rather than the game that catapulted her to superstardom.

Coupland concluded the book with an original fan fiction called "Air Tibet," illustrated by Kris Renkewitz. The short story had everything you'd expect from a classic Croft tale: an exotic location, a long-lost artifact, and someone with ill intentions at the center of it all. Enjoy one of Lara's early adventures on the following pages, republished thanks to the fine folks at Prima Games®.

AIR TIBET

A **LARA CROFT** Action/Adventure Comic

By **DOUGLAS COUPLAND**

Drawings by **KRIS RENKEWITZ**

With special thanks to **LIZ DUNN**, a real-life Lara

CHAPTER 1

It's a Himalayan film shoot. Lara strolls idly amid the bustle. Her breath puffs from her mouth like steam, while around her PAs bustle with cell phones and pagers, clipboards, sound booms, and lighting cables. Lara looks over her neck at all the hubbub, makes a resigned little *piff* of air, then heads to the sidelines.

There's a rise in the hubbub, and then silence as lights focus on a bosomy actress dressed in rayon skimpies and a brass tiara. She's lashed to a post and surrounded by angry Chinese opium warlords dressed in Prada minimalist black suits—all poised for kung fu as a voice in the background shouts:

"Speed, rolling, and . . . *action!*"

CLACK!

"Zoltar!" the actress says in a tinny voice, as if she's on speakerphone: "You are the embodiment of profound evil. I shall avenge the death of my downtrodden father if it's the last thing I do!" The warlords converge on the tethered actress.

"*CUT!*"

The director, Dominic Bellini, unclenches his body and shouts orders to the actress from his folding chair:

"Once more, honey—but this time I want you to think of your father's dying face when you say the words. I want the audience to remember along with you the explosion of entrails and teeth that greeted you as a child when you walked through the door on the way back from Girl Scouts—the anger you felt when you picked up the card left behind by the evil Chow that read: 'Chow: evil a specialty.'"

"Gotcha, Dommie."

She pauses and concentrates. We look inside her head: it's a gorefest—heads crumpling, blood spraying—and then the actress returns to her post.

"Breathe deeply," shouts Dominic. "We need you to be chesty for all of us."

The actress inhales.

"Speed, rolling, and . . . *action!*"

CLACK!

"Zoltar! You are the embodiment of profound evil. I shall avenge the death of my downtrodden father if it's the last thing I do!" The warlords converge on the tethered actress.

"CUT!"

Dominic clasps his fingers together as everybody breathlessly awaits his verdict.

"Marvelous. Just marvelous. Everybody take five. Joni, honey, you were fab, but your hair's all wrong and we're going to reshoot it once more. Where's Terry? Terry? . . . *Somebody* fix Joni's hair! She's looking too butch."

Meanwhile, Lara walks toward a man standing at the edge of the set. The man is tall and elegantly dressed, and Lara detects the faint aroma of superiority exuding from his silk ascot. She smiles wryly to herself.

"Damien," she says. "I got your message. It sounded urgent. What on earth is wrong?"

"Lara! There you are! Splendid to see you! Well, I've got something *very exciting* in store for you! I have a few friends in Hollywood, you know, and I pulled some strings, and as soon as this scene starts you'll have the rare opportunity to meet Ms. Joni Cartwright, the talented star of this film." He stands back, grinning and appraising her. "Surprised?"

"Surprised. Am I surprised?" Lara muses out loud. "Actually, yes, I *am* surprised. Surprised that you would make the gross misjudgment that, number one, I have nothing better to do than to waste an afternoon meeting some spotty Hollywood actress and, number two, the private phone number I gave you *for emergencies* is to be used for anything short of, say, Lord Barnswell's emerald cartouche being stolen again."

Damien recovers his composure: "Well, Lara—it wasn't *me* who set this up. It was Lord Barnswell himself. Do you remember him? You met at the Buckingham Palace Security Advisory. He arranged for us to meet Ms. Cartwright here. They're filming an epic shoot-'em-up, terrorist-fighting, alien-battling, kung fu drama. Isn't that *exciting*?"

Lara sighs. *Hollywood.*

"Damien, get your priorities straight. Fighting lions and sharks and hunting for lost secrets of the world is exciting. Climbing the peaks of mountains and swimming the ocean depths is exciting. Meeting the star of *Glenda—Amazon Princess* is *not* exciting."

"Oh, Lara, why must you always be so difficult? I'm leaving for Singapore so I can't hang around. But please, go and introduce yourself to Ms. Cartwright. Who knows—perhaps there's a movie role in your future . . ."

Lara's eyebrows lift.

"Hardly, Damien."

"Look, they're about to start shooting . . ."

In the near distance, the machinery of film begins:

"Speed, rolling, and . . . *action!*"

CLACK!

"Zoltar! You are the embodiment of profound evil. I shall avenge the death of my downtrodden father if it's the last thing I do!" The warlords converge on the tethered actress.

"CUT!"

Dominic claps his hands and pretends to wipe away a tear. "Joni, honey, that was *fab*ulous. Where's the stunt double? We'll need her in thirty minutes."

"Thanks, Dommie, honey. Ug! My fingernails ache. They're throbbing. They need a massage. Terry! *Anybody!* Where's my manicurist?"

Assistants with nail files and bottled water swarm about Joni Cartwright, while behind her a stunt double prepares to be blowtorched during a simulation of a gang fight in a rustic opium shed.

Lara snorts.

"Stunt double! Did you hear that, Damien? Miss Kick-thingy the Amazon uses a *stunt double.*"

"Lara! Keep your voice down! Rudeness is never called for. You don't understand. This is how films are made. Hollywood is the land of illusion. Anyway, I'm off to the airfield. Give us a wave when you see us fly over."

Something clicks in Lara's head.

"Damien, why are you going to Singapore?"

Damien hesitates that tiny frozen moment that indicates something is "up."

"... Oh, you know, Lord Barnswell's been helping his dear old friend Ming-Wo with the speech he's delivering tomorrow. It'll be a planeload of politicians and myself. The lord thought it would be good for me to meet them—you know, hobnob a bit."

"You're friends with Ming-Wo? He leaves a slime trail wherever he slithers. The Sherpas told me he's stocked a cave up north with Soviet SK-26 nuclear warheads he purchased from Belarus with laundered opium money."

"Lara! So judgmental. All rumors. And really—your politics can be so tiresome. Ming-Wo's a dear when you get to know him. Remind me to introduce you."

"I'd rather meet a B-movie actress like Joni Cartwright than scum like Ming-Wo any day."

"Well, then, get on with it. Ta-ta."

Lara pokes about the film shoot, restless amid the jittering cables and lights and egos. She wanders away briefly to practice shooting apples from a nearby tree.

"It's like ..."

pyeeow!

pyeeow!

pyeeow!

"... a Zen ..."

pyeeow!

pyeeow!

"... exercise!"

pyeeow!

"Ace! Six for six."

A harried production assistant whisks over and asks Lara to keep the noise down.

"Okay then," Lara thinks, *"where's the Amazon princess? Better get this over with and get on with my day. I've got a lot to do. I have to finish climbing that mountain I started climbing yesterday. Hmmph, kung fu, indeed! I 'kung fu' better than her when I stretch to paint my toenails."*

At the catering wagon Lara ignores the tortellinis and stale focaccias and selects some congealed beans and stale toast. "Finally," she

mutters aloud, "something fit to eat. . . . Excuse me?" Lara calls to somebody off to her right. "Pass me a plate?"

"Gotcha."

"Oh—it's . . . *you*," Lara says.

"Why the strange look? Yes, it's me. Joni Cartwright. Are you a fan?" She proffers her hand for Lara to shake.

"Not . . . exactly." Lara looks at the outstretched hand, and then back at Joni's face. "I'm Lara Croft, here by way of Lord Barnswell. He's a friend of yours then?"

"Oooh, you know Saucy Jack Barnswell? Are you a—umm . . . close, personal friend of the lord's?" Joni's eyes narrow.

"Oh, *please*. That grizzled old perv? I rather think not," Lara says. Then she notices a jeweled necklace draped around Joni's neck. Lara's eyes lock onto it.

"Oh—so you've noticed my new eggy-weggy, then?" Joni says, holding up the egg-shaped piece. The gems sparkle wildly in the sunlight. "Isn't it the dandiest thing? I met the sweetest young man at dinner last night. He was totally besotted with me, you know. I have a way with them." Joni's eyes gleam dangerously, and she winks.

"With men, or with other people's jewels?" Lara asks. But Lara can't take her eyes off the piece. She's captivated. She leans forward and takes it in her hand. After a few seconds, she says, "This is pretty amazing, Ms. Cartwright—600 BC . . . Thong Dynasty, but theoretically crafted in ancient Jordan. Used in religious ceremonies. Someone just *gave* this to you? Out of the blue?"

"Not exactly out of the *blue* . . ."

CHAPTER 2

We flash back to the previous night. An elegant dinner table is set about with exotic flowers and fluted glasses. Manservants attend to the dinner guests' every whim. Joni is seated next to an adoring young man, Ping—age 20, perhaps—whose eyes send her a string of fluttering hearts, like something from an old Archie comic. Ping's father, Ming-Wo, a severe gentleman in the style of a Jackie Chan villain, watches as Joni and Ping lock eyes. Ming-Wo has a premonition of Joni and Ping rutting feverishly in one of his mansion's stylishly empty rooms. His brow releases a drop of sweat.

"Ping!"

"Father?"

"Finish your dinner. Miss Cartwright doesn't need to hear about the grade on your algebra test or your pet frog."

"But Fa—"

"*Eat!*"

Ping looks peeved and Joni sends him a sympathetic glance.

"He's jealous," she whispers.

"I've never seen him like this. There's something about you that drives him crazy."

"Maybe it's because I prefer you to him."

Ping is shocked. "Really?"

"Oh, yes." She locks her leg around his under the table and Ping flushes. His excitement increases as she makes polite small talk and continues rubbing. "What a beautiful house you live in. You must have many fine things here—vases, carpets, *jewels* . . ."

"Oh, yes, we have lots of jewels." Ping speaks as Joni slips her hand under his shirt and strokes the down on his lower back.

Joni sighs. "Gee, I'd love to have a small trinket to remind me of the, err . . . *exciting* time I'm planning to have here."

"Yes. A beautiful trinket." Ping has trouble keeping his voice even.

"Yes," Joni says, "a little necklace . . . I don't know . . . silver, perhaps, with a few jewels, shaped like so . . ." With a celery stalk she traces the outline of an egg on the tablecloth.

"Gee, I think we have one just like that," Ping says.

"No—I couldn't take . . ."

"It's easy," Ping says. "We have jewels everywhere. Meet me on the jasmine verandah after dessert . . ."

It's a few hours later. Joni stands silhouetted on the verandah. A voice calls out, "Miss Cartwright—"

She whispers, "Call me Joni . . ."

"Your trinket."

"Thank you." She places it around her neck, puts one arm around Ping, and with the other reaches to pull blackness down from the sky, as though lowering a blind.

CHAPTER 3

Now we're back at the film shoot, at the catering wagon where Joni is once more speaking to Lara:

"Yes, this buff young man at dinner last night was *too* kind, really. He handed it over to me like it came free with a tank of gas!" She gives a satisfied chuckle.

Lara continues inspecting the amulet closely. Sunlight glints off the red stones and a white metal gleams underneath.

"The metal underneath—it's aluminum. Aluminum used to be very valuable, more so than gold, until the twentieth century. And nobody knows where they found the ore back in ancient Jordan, or how they smelted it back then. It's one of the great riddles of archaeology. But this piece, this piece seems familiar to me . . . I've read ancient texts that describe a pair of amulets, which, when intersected in some way, have mysterious powers . . ."

Joni's eyes narrow, her nostrils flare.

"What do *you* know about it?"

"Nothing really. Just some goat-leather texts that allude to a pair of jewel-encrusted, egg-shaped amulets. A coincidence, probably, but still . . ." Lara looks Joni in the eye. "Did the young man tell you anything about this amulet?" she asks.

"Of course. He told me it looked fabulous on me, and he was *so* right. I think it was his father's." Joni inhales Jell-O cubes as Lara eats her beans. "I saw you shooting those apples over there. You're good. Are you a stunt double?"

"I'm an archaeologist. Here," Lara says, "watch this."

"Watch what?"

"Watch *me*. I'm going to show you how to kick like a *real* woman. It's like this: you have to pivot on your shin like so, and then flex your legs like . . ."

kerthwap!

Lara sends the catering table flying across the mountain meadow.

"*. . . that!*"

Joni squeals with delight. "That was great."

"What the . . . ?" Dominic Bellini races over. "Can't I get even a little bit of peace here in this godforsaken country?"

Joni winks at Lara. "It was a yak, Dominic—a wild yak. It came out of nowhere."

Lara winks back. "Actually it's mating season. I imagine the poor chap was hoping for a bit of . . . action . . ."

Dominic has a fit. "Yaks? Nobody told me about yaks. Get Marty on the phone. Why wasn't I told

about yaks? Everybody get ready for the next scene. Joni—meet your mark and fer God's sake, wipe off your mouth—you've got Jell-O all over it. Terry! Where *is* Terry—did he even show up today?"

The next scene is set up: Glenda, the Amazon Princess, has just broken free from the post to which she had been tied by thuggish opium dealers. Now she's to kung fu her way out from behind walls of opium bales.

"Speed, rolling, and . . . *action!*"

CLACK!

"Now you've had it, you obsequious poltroons."

[*kick, thwap, boomp, toss, hurtle, thunk . . .*]

"This is the day I avenge the death of my father . . ."

Glenda's line is cut short by the sound of a jet passing overhead.

"CUT!"

Dominic is furious. "What the hell is a *jet* doing here? Last night at the dinner, Ming-Wo told me no flights were scheduled over local airspace all day. We're going to lose an hour waiting for the contrail to evaporate."

"That's ironic," Lara says, "considering Ming-Wo himself is likely to be on that very plane. It's the Singapore flight."

Joni moves closer as Lara looks up and waves at Damien.

"Singapore? Jeezus . . . And who exactly are *you*?"

"Dommie, this is Lara Croft," Joni says. "She's—"

Meanwhile, on the set, stage crew are using a small laser-pointer to help level some plywood sheets being set up for the next shot. A small red dot that flickers about, touching people's bodies, their hair, a coffeepot, a plank. And then . . .

. . . the small red dot moves across Joni's chest. The beam hits her amulet's largest jewel. A noise like a transformer's thrum reverberates through the set.

"What the . . ." Dominic and Lara look on as Joni begins vibrating like a freight train. The sky goes dark, as though a massive alien mothership is landing directly over them.

"Run for it!"

Dominic and crew begin to scramble as Lara says, "I knew it. I just *knew* it. Joni, hang on. We're in for one hell of a ride here, and it isn't on the Number 14 double-decker to Piccadilly."

CHAPTER 4

A foaming tornado of light forms around Joni, who rises from the ground. Lara jumps up and grabs Joni's leg just as a light-cyclone tall as a skyscraper whisks them up into the mountain air.

"Shit," Dominic cries. "Is this covered by insurance?" A Panavision camera swoops across the set and brains him, severing his head, which flies off and lands in the baked beans lying near the overturned catering table. Meanwhile, Joni and Lara zoom ever upward.

"I knew it," Lara shouts. "I *knew* it."

"Knew what? Knew *what*? Lara—what is this?"

Joni screams as debris whirls everywhere. "I thought these things only hit trailer parks."

"It's the Lai-Chi Solar Shame Spiral," Lara says.

"The Li—*what?*"

"Shame Spiral. It's a vortex of righteous indignation. It appears during times of great corruption to avenge crimes against the underdog. That necklace you're wearing is the key. It's not just some bauble, love. It's the other half to something quite grand, let me tell you. There are two necklaces, not just one. And I think we're on our way to meet its mate."

"Then where's the other one? *Where is it?!*" Joni's face contorts with frustration and rage.

"*Yeeow!*" Lara dodges the boom mikes and cameras and film whirling around them, kicking away much of the debris. "Wherever it is, we're about to find out. Once the two amulets of the Shame Spiral are separated, the forces of the universe conspire to rejoin the pair. There can only be one outcome. A holy battle between forces of good and evil."

"How do you *know* all this?"

CHAPTER 5

We're in the sky above the Himalayas, where we see Damien's jet: it's tethered by the Shame Spiral, lasso'd in place by a rope of fire.

"Grab onto the wing, Joni!" Lara shouts. "Grab it, or we're toast."

boonk!

The two women hold onto the wing as light shimmers about them, its whiteness forming eddying shapes of skulls and fists. Meanwhile, the jet's passengers are unaware of the activity outside. Damien hears a small noise from the wing and looks out the window.

"*Lara!*"

"Greetings, Damien." Lara and Joni cling to the wing flap, their legs thrust skyward. "Be a love," Lara shouts, "and smash the window for us. Or I can shoot it open. What's easiest for you?"

"Wha—?"

"Lower your head!"

Lara shoots the window and then struggles to climb in through the jagged aperture. Napkins and papers from throughout the cabin rattle forward in one great sucking motion. But Lara can't fit through, and she curses her ample bosom.

The plane's other passengers notice the maelstrom outside and their faces are suction-cupped against the glass. Ming-Wo, sipping champagne with his cronies, looks surprisingly cool—almost as if he'd expected all this.

"Watch out!" he barks. "Those two witches are trying to kill us all!" He smashes open an overhead luggage bin. An Uzi tumbles out, and he loads it with a vibrant *chank-chank*. "Stand to the sides!" He reaches with his left arm and wallops his silent son, Ping, pulling him violently to his side.

"How'd you get *that* past the metal detectors?" a stewardess blurts.

"When you're Ming-Wo you can put whatever you want wherever you want—including my fist in your face if you don't shut up."

At this, Damien hurls himself at Ming-Wo, but is yanked away by two of Ming-Wo's henchmen and tossed into the galley against a clattering tray of sandwiches.

"It's time to eat some bullets, Sweetie," says Ming-Wo, taking aim at Joni—still in view on the wing, quietly watching the show, seemingly in shock. "You'll never get both those necklaces! Give me back my amulet, you thieving minx!"

Damien, his head bloodied, lurches from the galley toward the rear exit and grabs the hatch. The door flings open. Damien struggles to hold on, his body flapping in the wind like damp laundry. The suction ejects the captain, who'd emerged from the cockpit to see what all the noise was about. Magazines, dinner trays, sweaters, wigs, electronic toys, and little polyester pillows careen

about the cabin and then exit, along with a few passengers. As the pressure equalizes, the plane's hemorrhage of air ceases. Oxygen masks unfurl from over the seats. All that remains of Damien is a bloody stump of an arm, its fingers still clenched around the door handle.

Ming-Wo and his henchmen have been blown backward but quickly regain their place in the aisle, where they shoot out a row of ten windows, sending glass flying as passengers scream and dive for cover. Sparks fly from where the bullets hit the metal wing

"Where is she? I have to have that amulet! She was wearing it!" Ming-Wo screams. "I can't complete my plans without it! She stole it from my idiot son!"

"She didn't steal it," Lara shouts.

Joni adds, "Yeah! Your son effing-well gave it to me."

"Ping—is this true?"

Ping nods.

"You stupid, simpering fool!" Ming-Wo chops Ping in the esophagus. The boy's knees buckle and he tumbles onto the aisle, where Ming-Wo curses him more fully. "Now she can steal the power."

The tethered plane pitches and yaws.

Lara looks down on the Himalayas from the hovering plane. "Wait here," she says to Joni, who huddles in the small safe area where the wing joins the craft's hull. The lights of the Spiral swirl around them.

"*Hmmm . . . How am I going to do this?*" Lara thinks, wondering how can she maneuver to the door Damien opened. And then she decides: hand over hand, window by window, she monkey-climbs up the side of the plane, then grabs the bloody arm and catapults through the door. Recognizing the watch on the wrist as Damien's, she wrenches the fingers off the handle and flings the stump out of the plane.

"You forgot something!" she calls. Then she pivots and races into the cabin, guns blazing, henchmen exploding like melons dropped onto pavement on the hottest day of the year. Ming-Wo wears the smug grin of the heavily protected.

Passengers cower in their seats. It's down to Lara and Ming-Wo, face to face.

"Get ready to die, you bloodsucking pig. You'll burn in hell for what you did to your people."

"Oh? And what exactly did I do to my people?"

"You took every penny they had and funneled it into nuclear weapons and drug-running. You've ruined an entire nation."

"How sentimental," Ming-Wo smiles. A wounded henchman comes to behind Lara. Ming-Wo signals him to act, but the henchman hesitates. Ming-Wo tries to buy time:

"Miss Croft. Let's dispense with the name-calling. Sticks and stones . . . Why don't you just quietly hop out the door and leave this little domestic squabble to me and my *people*? Don't you have a tomb to raid somewhere?"

"This isn't between you and your people, Creepshow. It's between you and me and humanity. And I don't know about humanity, but I'm pretty pissed off, you festering pus-bag."

"Pretty words . . ." Ming-Wo's finger tightens on the Uzi's trigger.

And then a light flashes.

"What the—?"

CHAPTER 6

The jet's roof splits open, revealing a sliver of blue. Joni's body floats off the wing and up into the open sky above the plane's cabin. There, her body suddenly blossoms into the massive face of an ancient Dowager Queen.

"Ming-Wo—your reign is over. You have abused your rule and today you will be judged!"

Ming-Wo, sweating profusely, fires bullets into the huge face—but, of course, nothing happens.

The Dowager laughs. "It's not that easy, Mr. Ming-Wo. Not that easy at all."

"Joni—" Lara cries. "You're not Joni at all! You're—"

"Yes, Lara, I'm the Dowager Thong. Your knowledge of history and archaeology is superb. The Lai-Chi Solar Shame Spiral is not exactly everyday classroom teaching."

"What's going on?" a stewardess asks from the floor.

Ming-Wo's teeth chatter. "Shut up!" Ping flinches away.

"Whoever has both amulets," Lara says, "has great powers so long as the two remain together. The amulets lose their power if they're stolen. And they can convey power if they're physically handed over. Ping's daddy-poo has been using the power of his two amulets to arm this country to the teeth with nuclear weapons."

The Dowager speaks. "Ming-Wo and I go back a long way, don't we, Ming-Wo? The two of us have met and done battle in many other places and times, but this time—*I WILL BE VICTORIOUS . . . !*"

A montage of imagery races through Lara's mind: Nordic Valkyrie-Thor spear fests . . . a U.S. Civil War battlefield . . . a futuristic *Star Wars*-style dogfight.

Thong's voice booms through the atmosphere. The jet begins to vibrate and then tilt, sending passengers and things—laptops, drink trolleys, playing cards, paperbacks—tumbling forward.

Ming-Wo turns to face Lara. He raises his Uzi, but Lara shoots him in his gun arm. Both arm and weapon fly back and crash to the floor of the cabin. Ming-Wo's gun discharges a round, nearly severing another passenger's arm.

"Good shooting, Babe," says the Dowager.

"*Babe?*" says Lara.

"A word I picked up during my incarnation as an American film star. And now for *you*, Mr. Ming-Wo—I will have the other amulet."

"No, Dowager Thong, you may *not* have the amulet."

"Oh, give us a break. And it was so very clever of you to keep secret the power of the master amulet from even your precious firstborn. He's a lousy lay, by the way. Like father like son . . . But it was worth it to get the first amulet. That's not enough, though, is it, Ming-Wo? You must have both or it doesn't work . . . And I want both of them—*now*!"

A bolt of lightning flies down and the plane shudders. Ming-Wo's remaining henchman uses the distraction to try and overtake Lara, who runs down the cabin along the tops of the seats. A bullet strikes a panel, causing the in-flight movie screens to descend. Ten of them play Joni Cartwright films at full volume. As Joni fires and deflects onscreen, so does Lara, working her way forward toward the one-armed Ming-Wo.

"Hey, Creepshow," Lara hisses, returning to where Ming-Wo stands beneath the ripped-open ceiling. "Give Mrs. Thong her amulet or I'll turn your other arm into a wishbone."

"Thank you, Miss Croft." Encircling the face of the Dowager Thong, ghosts of the avenging dead smile and raise knives and forks and chopsticks. "We're very hungry, Ming-Wo. It's been a few centuries since we've last eaten. I think I feel like, hmm—a *leg*!"

"Where did you get the energy to do this?" Ming-Wo cries frantically. "It was never this powerful before."

"How nice of you to ask. I found those delightful little Soviet SK-26 nuclear warheads you stashed in the Cavern of the Gods. A pleasant little energy booster." The Dowager snarls, then screams, "The amulet—*give it to me now!*"

"Never!" shouts Ming-Wo. He reaches into his shirt, but it's hopeless. Chopsticks and forks zoom toward him, sharp as spears.

He clings to the legs of a passenger seat but he's pulled away abruptly, his remaining hand still attached to the metal. From around his neck, an amulet levitates over his head and floats toward the Dowager, who grabs it.

The Dowager laughs. "Yes—thank you very much, Mr. Ming-Wo. And now it's time for you to settle your debt."

Ming-Wo is raised up into the hungry maw of the angry dead. The deafening roar of sucking and chewing sounds terrify the passengers.

"*Wait!*" screams the Dowager, "*this is a fake!* What have you done to the original?" The spectral ghouls spit a bloodied Ming-Wo back into the cabin. He laughs hysterically.

"You'll never find it."

"Father!" Ping shouts, running to Ming-Wo's shredding remains.

"Father, my ass," Lara says, nailing Ping directly in the forehead. Even the Dowager is aghast.

"You hellbitch," Ming-Wo hisses.

"You shot his son!" cries the Dowager. "That wasn't a part of the equation."

"This is no son, Dowager. Look—" Lara grabs Ping's scalp and lifts it up, yanking off a latex mask in the process. "This ain't Ping." The group gasps.

"It's—*Terry*!" shouts the Dowager Thong.

"**How did you know?**" grunts Ming-Wo, defeated.

CHAPTER 7

"Your son has Gladstone's Condition, Ming-Wo," answers Lara. "You know it and I know it. It's been hot gossip at the embassy ever since Lord Barnswell got drunk at the Swedish National Day celebrations and shot off his mouth."

"Gladstone's . . . what? What, pray tell . . ."says the Dowager. Ming-Wo shakes his head in disgust.

"Named after the British prime minister—a condition wherein the sufferer is psychologically unable to use any toilet other than his own seat

at home." Lara looks down pitifully at Ming-Wo. "You never could have gotten Ping away from your Shangri La except by force, could you, Ming-Wo?"

Ming-Wo gives Dowager Thong the evil eye.

"I . . . I always knew you'd be back, Thong. I always kept an eye out for whatever woman might be stupid enough or crafty enough to sleep with Ping. For a while I thought it might have been *you*, Miss Croft. I saw you in the Beinecke Rare Books Library in Boston."

"You do Ping a disservice, Ming-Wo. He's turning out to be quite a dish. I wonder if, in fact, he might be nearby?" Lara becomes coquettish. "Hmm . . . I wonder if we might find Ping up in, say—" She shoots a locked overhead storage bin. A gagged-and-bound Ping tumbles out, landing on a dead henchman.

"*There*. How convenient to store the other amulet in an unlikely place, never likely to stray very far, Ming-Wo . . . inside your very own son."

Lara walks over to the terrified Ping and pulls a knife out of her belt.

"I'm losing energy!" the Dowager shrieks. "I must have the other half of the amulet soon or the plane will fall. I can't hold it up much longer." The plane lurches downward. The oxygen masks sway like reeds in the wind. Bodies go *kachunk* and more and more cabin litter floats and falls earthward—Adidas bags, sandwiches, teddy bears . . .

Lara uses her knife to cut Ping's bonds, and then holds the knife out to him. "The other amulet was placed inside you during your appendectomy three years ago. I wouldn't be too surprised if it were connected to an electrical stun unit that zapped you every time you tried to use a loo that wasn't equipped with an unzapper. Correct?"

"Yes! Yes! And father was going to Singapore to finalize a vast new addition to his arsenal."

"Hurry. You must do the deed, Ping. You must cut out the amulet and hand it to the Dowager, or the plane crashes and we all die."

Lara leans over to pass the knife and then quickly slices into the right side of Ping's belly. There's a clank, some sparks, and a drool of blood. Before much else can happen, Lara pulls out the bloody amulet and tosses it into the still-roaring jet engines, sending a shimmer of aluminum and ruby confetti down to the Himalayan meadow.

"Nobody should have that much power," Lara says.

"No!" the Dowager screams.

"Yes," Lara says. "And lower us to the ground. You'll save your soul by doing so. It's either that or go where Ming-Wo's gone to."

"Yes," agrees the Dowager. "You are correct."

There's a final burst of light, and a tendril of lightning brings Lara the jewel Joni (a.k.a. "the Dowager") had worn. As an afterthought, the lightning bolt retrieves Ming-Wo's arm from the floor and carries it back into the light ball with a chomping noise.

"Mmmm. Crunchy."

The Dowager and her spirits vanish.

"*Ciao*, Babe," says Lara.

"Lara," says Ping. "You still have one amulet . . ."

"I do, don't I? And I'll make sure it finds a safe home in some nice little museum. Separated from its mate it can't do any harm now."

She bends down to stanch the flow of blood. "We'll have you in a hospital soon. Now be a love and tuck your liver back inside you. Thanks."

The light dims as the plane gently lowers to earth. Once it's safely on the ground, passengers roam about its carcass in a daze. Snow falls lightly on the wreckage and the movie set, on Dominic's head and the spilled bowl of beans, on

the make-up boxes and the film spools. All turns white as we see Lara's footprints leading away—up the mountain and into the snow.

EPILOGUE

EXTRA Special Issue!
Vol. LXIV
Movie Star, Defense Minister, 8 Others Killed in Freak Accident. Adventurer Lara Croft Unhurt. Croft Donates Yet Another Treasure.

Himalayan Mountains. A shocking and bizarre accident occurred yesterday during the filming of Dominic Bellini's latest project "Glenda—Amazon Princess." A freak tornado struck the filming site, sweeping up the crew and equipment, and sending everything into chaos. Victims were found lying miles away in mountain passes, trees, and snowdrifts.

Mr. Bellini's body was found late yesterday by rescue crews. Doctors declare he died by decapitation. Actress Joni Cartwright is still missing.

The twister also caught in its deadly grasp a passing jet bound for Singapore, Thailand. Witnesses of the disaster say that the plane seemed to hover overland while flashes of light and strong winds ripped it apart. Among the plane's passengers were the British Defense Minister and Mr. Ming-Wo.

Flashback to three years earlier in the Beinecke Rare Books Library, Boston, Massachusetts, in a massive, elegant, 1960s-style marble prism. Lara sits at a table illuminated by a small lamp, poring over the pages of a rotting book with white-gloved hands. A librarian in the tradition of Miss Moneypenny asks Lara if there are any other books she'd like to see.

"You're my favorite patron, Miss Croft," she adds. "Without you, all these dusty old books are merely . . . dusty old books. You make the past come alive. I live through you in a way. So do many of the archaeologists here in Boston."

"That's kind of you to say. Tell me, might you have any books on ancient Jordanian jewelry?"

"Why, as a matter of fact, we *do*! Funny you should ask . . ."

Lara perks up. "Why is that?"

"There was a gentleman here this morning. He asked to see the same book."

"Really now?"

"Yes. And he was also looking for books on cave maps of the Himalayas. An odd combination, don't you think?"

"Truly. Did he leave a card behind? A name?"

"Maybe—his driver called him Mr. Ming-Wo. And his accent is from around Tibet. I speak some Chinese—my parents were missionaries."

"Might I be able to see those cave maps, as well?"

"Absolutely. Wait right here."

The books arrive and Lara scans them slowly. "Hmmm. Oh my *my* . . ."

SHADOW OF THE CAT: A LOST LARA CROFT MANGA

Illustrated by artist Kris Renkewitz (who also contributed art to Douglas Coupland's original story "Air Tibet"), "Shadow of the Cat" was originally intended to debut in *Lara's Book* along side his other work. But it was never officially published. Formerly an artist and designer at Eidos, Renkewitz left the company in early 1997. He acted as consultant on the repackaging of *Tomb Raider* (1996) with bonus levels, known as *Tomb Raider: Unfinished Business* (or *Tomb Raider Gold*). His full-time gig at the time was as a senior artist and designer on *Diablo II* at Blizzard North. In the evenings, he illustrated "Air Tibet" and this manga Renkewitz eventually returned to Eidos for a period of three months, worked on levels and art for *Tomb Raider II Gold*, and also assisted with packaging. The manga reads from right to left, as is traditional with the medium. Intended to be a visual walkthrough of *Tomb Raider Gold*, the illustrations indicated where to find the first hidden key in the Shadow of the Cat level within the *Unfinished Business* expansion. Philip Campbell, Eidos's senior designer on *Tomb Raider Gold*, worked with Renkewitz on the story. This isn't the first time that Lara was illustrated in a manga-inspired style the official Japanese *Tomb Raider* (1996) guide featured a super *kawaii* Croft, Natla, and other characters from Lara's big debut. "Shadow of the Cat" was uncovered by Rodrigo Martín Santos of TombRaiderCollection.com.

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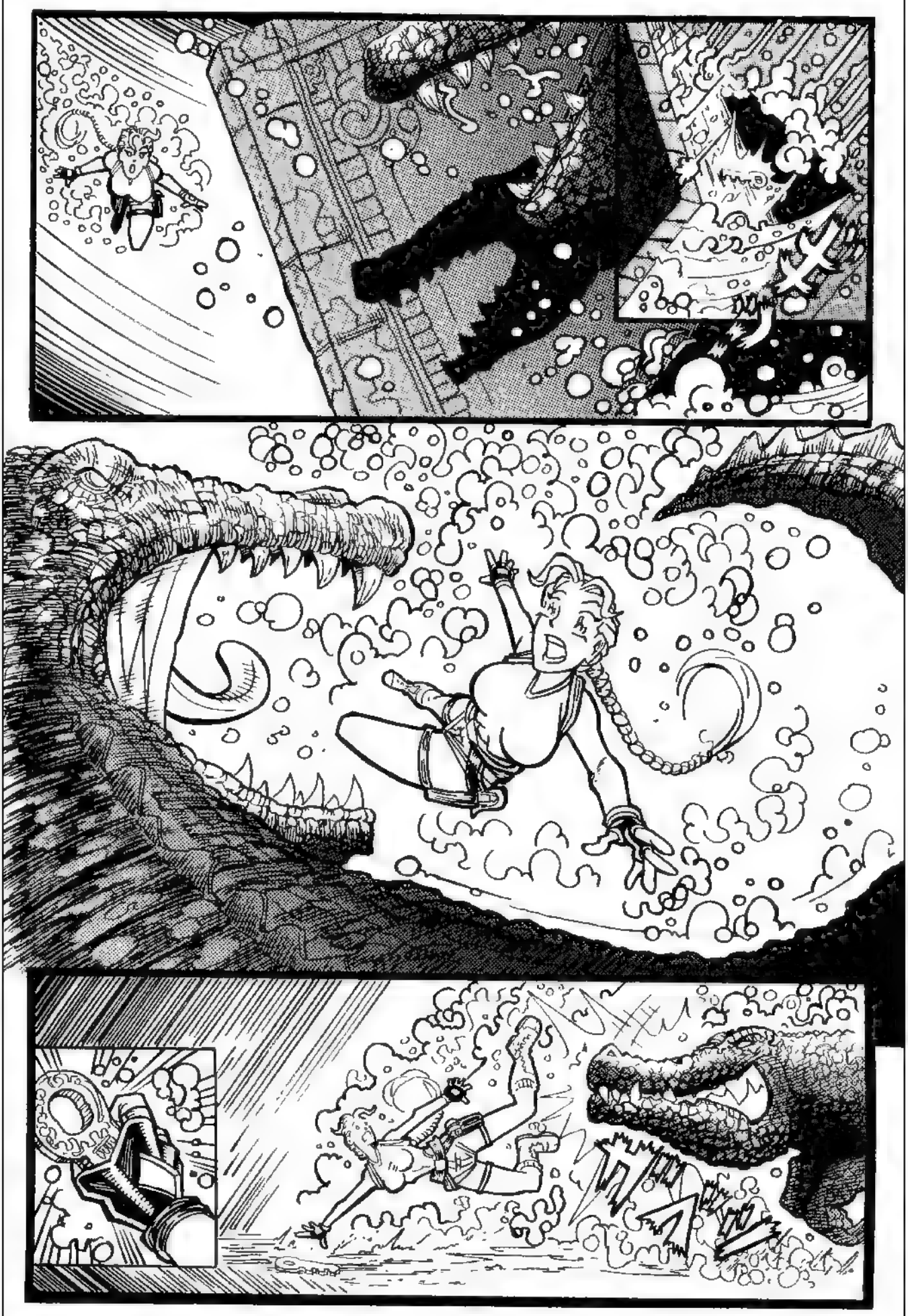

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